

WALTHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Waltham, Massachusetts
REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

JUNE 3, 2026

The regular meeting of the Waltham School Committee convened at 5:39pm. Present were Ms. DeJoannis, Mrs. AlJammal, Mrs. Coleman, Mr. Tarallo, and Mr. Zanghi. Ms. Wong-Bigelow and Mayor McCarthy were not present. Mrs. Coleman presided.

RECESS

VOTED: On motion of Ms. DeJoannis, seconded by Mrs. AlJammal, to move to Executive Session at 5:39pm to conduct strategy sessions with respect to collective bargaining with the WSSA and / or to conduct negotiations with the WSSA; to conduct strategy sessions with respect to collective bargaining with the WSAA and / or to conduct negotiations with the WSAA; to conduct strategy sessions with respect to collective bargaining with the Waltham School MIS Technicians and / or to conduct negotiations with the Waltham School MIS Technicians; to conduct strategy sessions with respect to collective bargaining with the Waltham School Department Food Service Workers and / or conduct negotiations with the Waltham School Department Food Service Workers; to conduct strategy sessions with respect to collective bargaining with the Waltham School Building Trades; To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel and/or to conduct negotiations with nonunion personnel – Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel and/or to conduct negotiations with nonunion personnel – Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, and In accordance with Mass. G.L. c. 30A, Section 21(a)(3), to discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares - Waltham Educators Association/MTA and the Waltham School Committee, MUP-26-12065, to include Attorney Jonathan Atwater, Superintendent Dr. Mendonsa and HR Administrator Kate Peretz, and return to the regular meeting at 7:00 pm. All in favor.

RECONVENE

The School Committee reconvened at 7:01pm. Present were Mr. Tarallo, Mr. Zanghi, Mrs. Coleman, Mrs. AlJammal, Ms. DeJoannis, Ms. Wong-Bigelow, and Mayor McCarthy. Mayor McCarthy presided.

The Chair announced the meeting was being recorded by WCAC. An individual confirmed they were recording the meeting for The Waltham Times.

The Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

The Committee held a Moment of Silence to remember John “Jack” Regan, who was a football coach, math teacher, housemaster, and long-time principal at Waltham High School.

VOTED: On motion of Mrs. Coleman, seconded by Mr. Tarallo, to move item 5A out of order. All in favor.

COMMUNICATIONS

- a) McDevitt
Middle
School's
Civics Projects

McDevitt's Civics Teacher Ken Borter, along with members of his eighth grade classes presented information from their Civics Day projects. The first group shared reasons why they believe the back field at the school should be fixed and provided supporting information. They explained what they believe it would require and cost

to make the field more user friendly for students and the community. The students also requested benches be added as currently soccer players have to sit on the ground during games.

The second group advocated for a big belly solar powered trash compactor to be added to the back of the McDevitt school. They believe the lack of trash cans outside of the building leads to trash and pollution to the field and school land. The students provided an analysis of what they believe is needed and the affiliated costs.

Ms. Wong-Bigelow asked the students about the addition of a recycling bin as well. The students confirmed that the version of solar powered trash compactor they are requesting is for both trash and recycling. The Mayor added that the city's DPW can help with the concrete slabs and some other items that are needed.

PUBLIC INPUT

There was no one who requested to address the Committee.

STUDENT COUNCIL STUDENT INPUT

Waltham High School student John McCalla updated the members on all recent and upcoming senior events and also noted that multiple high school students competed in the recent boys and girls track tournament.

SCHOOL COUNCIL/PTO/ SEPAC/BELPAC INPUT

There was no one present from these groups who requested to speak with the Committee.

CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Mendonsa presented the following Consent Agenda items:

- Minutes from the Regular Meeting held on May 20, 2026;

Resignations:

- Kaitlyn Schneider, 4th Grade Teacher, MacArthur Elementary School - effective 06/30/2026;
- Michelle Torrez, Speech Therapist, Waltham High School - effective 06/30/2026;
- Hannah Kimker, Girl Soccer Coach, Kennedy Middle School - effective 06/30/2026

VOTED: On motion of Mr. Tarallo, seconded by Mrs. Coleman, to approve the Consent Agenda. All in favor.

COMMUNICATIONS (cont.)

- b) Staff out of district request for the 2026-2027 school year

VOTED: On motion of Mrs. Coleman, seconded by Ms. Wong-Bigelow, to approve the staff out of district request for the 2026-2027 school year. All in favor.

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATEa) Miscellaneous Personnel**New Hires:**

- Logan Marifiote, Substitute Teacher, District-Wide - effective 05/19/2026;
- Alexandra Jameson, Elementary School Nurse, Plympton Elementary School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Nicholas LaForest, Substitute Teacher, District-Wide - effective 06/01/2026;
- Karla Panameno, Substitute Teacher, District-Wide - effective 06/01/2026;
- Alyssa Queen, Substitute Teacher, District-Wide - effective 06/01/2026;
- Nicholas Cohn, Substitute Teacher, District-Wide - effective 06/01/2026;
- Shannon Middleton, Substitute Nurse, District-Wide - effective 06/01/2026

Transfers and Promotions:

- Joyce Quaranto, Library Paraprofessional, Waltham High School - effective 06/01/2026

b) Information

Dr. Mendonsa announced that twenty-six students graduated from Valor High School last week. Waltham High's graduation will take place on Sunday, June 7th. The superintendent gave a shout-out to a number of WHS athletes who medaled in the MIAA Division II State Meet last weekend. Additionally, DESE has approved the partnership between Waltham High and Regis College for Initial Designation as a Massachusetts Early College Program beginning this fall.

The superintendent then shared information with the Committee about the lack of extra classroom space at the elementary schools and noted a number of new developments being built in the city which will have an impact on the district. The superintendent cautioned that with the continued addition of new housing developments, the impact to school buildings, staff and transportation will increase. She asked for the Committee's guidance on how to proceed with additional requests in the future.

A discussion between multiple members and the superintendent ensued about available space at 617 Lexington Street, whether the possible expansion of the Dual Language School could alleviate some of the enrollment in other elementaries, re-districting again versus building a new school, possible sites for a new school, the enrollment projection for the next decade, and shifting some of the grades within the school levels.

VOTED: On motion of Mr. Tarallo, seconded by Mrs. AlJammal, to add this matter to the next meeting's agenda. All in favor.

c) Monthly District Enrollment

The superintendent confirmed the month of June kicked off with 5,644 students which is the same number of students that began the school year in the district.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

There was nothing new shared in Curriculum and Instruction at the meeting.

**UNFINISHED
BUSINESS**

- a) Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion There was nothing new discussed under this item.
- b) Dual Language School Model and Reutilization of 617 Lexington Street A proposal for the future use of the 617 Lexington Street building will be presented at the next meeting.
- c) Waltham High School's Career and Technical Education (CTE) Department **VOTED:** On motion of Mrs. Coleman, seconded by Mr. Tarallo, to hear from off-committee members. All in favor.
- d) Waltham High School Schedule Ms. DeJoannis requested Dr. Conley provide a list of technical colleges that the CTE Department has relationships with for the benefit of CTE students.
- The WHS Schedule Committee met Monday afternoon to continue working on designing new schedule options for the high school. Feedback is being obtained from staff and Dr. Conard will join the group this summer.

A conversation followed between Mayor McCarthy and Dr. Mendonsa about the impact CTE Chapter 74 programs have on the overall schedule and whether a schedule can be implemented that benefits both CTE and non-CTE students. Dr. Mendonsa confirmed that Chapter 74 students can take AP and Fine and Performing Arts classes but would be limited due to CTE program requirements.

- e) Valor High School **VOTED:** On motion of Mr. Tarallo, seconded by Mrs. Coleman, to table Valor High School for three years. All in favor.
- f) Renaming of Northeast Elementary School **VOTED:** On motion of Mr. Tarallo, seconded by Mrs. Coleman, to file the Renaming of Northeast Elementary School. All in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Conditions of Assistance **VOTED:** On motion of Mr. Tarallo, seconded by Ms. Wong-Bigelow, to authorize Mayor McCarthy to execute the Conditions of Assistance as the Chair of the Waltham School Committee. All in favor.

FISCAL MATTERS

- a) Bills on Warrant **VOTED:** On motion of Mr. Tarallo, seconded by Ms. DeJoannis, to pay the bills on warrant. All in favor.

**AGENDA ITEMS
FOR FUTURE
MEETINGS**

Mrs. Coleman requested the Superintendent's Evaluation be added to the next agenda.

Mr. Tarallo requested an update on the FY '27 budget.

VOTED: On motion by Mr. Tarallo, seconded by Mrs. AlJammal, to add Update from Mayor McCarthy on the FY '27 Budget process to the June 3, 2026 agenda under Unfinished Business. All in favor.

Mayor McCarthy began her update by explaining how she arrived at the amount of \$129,101,849., which she recommended to the City Council for the school department for the upcoming fiscal year. She explained her review of the amount requested by the school department and approved by the School Committee, and the additional positions that she accounted for within her figure. Based on DESE's website, the Mayor believes the district should receive approximately \$5.6M in Circuit Breaker funds. Mayor McCarthy further explained there has been a steep increase in health insurance costs to the city and recently, there is a lack of substantial commercial growth within Waltham. In reviewing the budget requests from all thirty city departments, she considered this and advised she will not put the city, and its taxpayers, in a financial position where an override is needed.

Mayor McCarthy advised she does not agree with the new administrator positions being proposed by the district and believes the curriculum directors should be more utilized in lieu of hiring additional staff.

Members Ms. Wong-Bigelow, Ms. DeJoannis, Mrs. AlJammal, and Mr. Tarallo, along with Dr. Mendonsa, asked questions and shared their opinion on the nearly \$7.8M budget difference being recommended by the Mayor to the City Council. Multiple members stated things within the district need to change, most notably at Waltham High, in order to improve performance and without the requested funding, this may not be possible. Members AlJammal and Tarallo both indicated they support the superintendent's proposed budget as they trust her vision for moving the district forward. The request for additional associate principals as well as the schedule issues at Waltham High were briefly discussed.

Ms. DeJoannis left the meeting at 9:17pm and returned at 9:19pm.

VOTED: On motion of Mr. Tarallo, seconded by Ms. Wong-Bigelow, to request the City Law Department's legal opinion on whether the School Committee can request the City Council reconsider the School Committee's original budget request. All in favor.

The conversation shifted to new positions already approved and filled for the upcoming year. Dr. Mendonsa advised the Committee she needs its guidance on reductions. Mayor McCarthy advised she protected the classrooms and supplies and accounted for contractual increases as well as other obligations.

The discussion moved to Special Education out-of-district costs and the large increase from the FY '26 budget to the proposed FY '27 budget. Both Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations Chad Mazza and Assistant Superintendent for Special Education and Student Services Lisa Kingsley explained the district is already contractually obligated to pay out of district tuition and transportation costs for ninety-eight children placed outside of Waltham Public Schools. There are currently four additional students awaiting outside placements.

Mayor McCarthy requested a spreadsheet of upcoming FY '27 out-of-district tuition and transportation costs. She also asked Mr. Mazza to have the year end report for FY '26 reflect any new positions added during the year so the accounts can be accurately reconciled.

Based on questions from Ms. Wong-Bigelow, Mr. Mazza indicated he believes all incoming bills should be paid from current accounts but he is not yet sure if there will be remaining funds to return to the city at the end of the fiscal year.

VOTED: On motion of Mr. Tarallo, seconded by Ms. Wong-Bigelow, to schedule a Special Meeting on June 10, 2026 to further discuss the FY '27 School Department budget. All in favor.

Mayor McCarthy requested the school department provide year end account amounts to all School Committee members.

ADJOURNMENT

VOTED: On motion of Mayor McCarthy, seconded by Mr. Tarallo, to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 10:25pm. All in favor.

Marisa Mendonsa
Clerk