

WALTHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Waltham, Massachusetts
REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

FEBRUARY 4, 2026

The regular meeting of the Waltham School Committee convened at 5:01pm. Present were Ms. Wong-Bigelow, Ms. DeJoannis, Mrs. AlJammal, Mrs. Coleman, Mr. Zanghi, and Mayor McCarthy. Mr. Tarallo was not present. Mayor McCarthy presided.

RECESS

VOTED: On motion of Mrs. Coleman, seconded by Mrs. AlJammal, to add the addendum item: Strategies with Respect to Negotiations with non-union personnel: Waltham High School Principal - John Barnes; Waltham Valor High School Interim Principal - Linda Flueckiger; Kennedy Middle School Principal - Kevin Gildea; McDevitt Middle School Principal - Scott Lipman; Dual Language Elementary School Principal - Ricardo Dobles; FitzGerald Elementary School Principal - Jennifer Santillo; MacArthur Elementary School Principal - Kevin Kmiec; Northeast Elementary School Principal - Mary Ellen Tenaglia; Plympton Elementary School Principal - Adrienne Norris; Stanley Elementary School Principal - Jennifer Hacker, and Whittemore Elementary School Principal - David Sweder, to the agenda. All in favor.

VOTED: On motion of Mrs. Coleman, seconded by Mrs. AlJammal, to move to Executive Session at 5:03pm to conduct strategy sessions with respect to collective bargaining with the WEA and / or to conduct negotiations with the WEA; 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 and / or to conduct negotiations with the Waltham School Building Trades; to conduct collective bargaining sessions to include a grievance hearing under Purpose 2 and to discuss strategy with respect to litigation under Purpose 3 if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares - Waltham School Administrators Association and Waltham School Committee, Grievance Dated November 4, 2025, WHS TASC Classroom Teacher Duties, and Strategies with Respect to Negotiations with non-union personnel: Waltham High School Principal - John Barnes; Waltham Valor High School Interim Principal - Linda Flueckiger; Kennedy Middle School Principal - Kevin Gildea; McDevitt Middle School Principal - Scott Lipman; Dual Language Elementary School Principal - Ricardo Dobles; FitzGerald Elementary School Principal - Jennifer Santillo; MacArthur Elementary School Principal - Kevin Kmiec; Northeast Elementary School Principal - Mary Ellen Tenaglia; Plympton Elementary School Principal - Adrienne Norris; Stanley Elementary School Principal - Jennifer Hacker, and Whittemore Elementary School Principal - David Sweder, to include Attorney Jonathan Atwater, HR Administrator Kate Peretz, and Superintendent Dr. Marisa Mendonsa, and to return to the regular meeting at 7:00 pm. All in favor.

RECONVENE

The School Committee reconvened at 7:11pm. Present were Mr. Tarallo, Mr. Zanghi, Mrs. Coleman, Mrs. AlJammal, Ms. DeJoannis, Ms. Wong-Bigelow, and Mayor McCarthy. Mayor McCarthy presided.

Mr. Tarallo led the Committee in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC INPUT

Michelle Campbell, a WPS parent, addressed the Committee to voice her concerns about the possible schedule changes being discussed at the high school. She acknowledged scheduling is an incredibly complex process, especially with CTE programming. She explained the perceived impact to students if the existing eight block schedule was reduced to seven or seven and a half blocks and indicated students would miss out on taking additional classes and earning needed credits. She also indicated eliminating Hawk Block would negatively impact students who rely on it for extra support and to collaborate with others on projects. Mrs. Campbell requested transparency and the opportunity for staff / families / students to provide feedback before a new schedule is voted on by the Committee.

**STUDENT COUNCIL
STUDENT INPUT**

Waltham High School student Anabel Rutledge shared that three successful performances of Dance Theatre took place last week; Senior Nights are ongoing for winter sports; the Girls' Basketball Program celebrated International Women in Sports Day; Senior Revue auditions are Friday, and the Gabby Petito Foundation held an impactful presentation for students at Waltham High earlier today.

**SCHOOL
COUNCIL/PTO/
SEPAC/BELPAC
INPUT**

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

CONSENT AGENDA

Superintendent Dr. Mendonsa presented the following Consent Agenda items:

- Minutes from the Regular Meeting held on January 21, 2026;

Retirements:

- Gerald Gross, Art Teacher, Northeast Elementary School - effective 6/30/2026;
- Sheila Ponte, Drama Specialist, Stanley Elementary School - effective 9/5/2026

Resignations:

- Kandice Aucoin, Lunch / Recess Monitor, Dual Language School - effective 1/20/2026;
- Rachael Tebeau, Lunch Monitor, Dual Language School - effective 1/6/2026;
- Isabel Powell, Long Term Sub, Stanley Elementary School - effective 2/6/2026;
- Jazmin Hernandez Molina, 3.5 hr Food Service Worker, Dual Language School - effective 1/29/2026

Dr. Mendonsa informed the Committee about a \$10,000 donation from the Boston Bruins Foundation to Northeast Elementary School. Northeast Elementary is one of ten BFit to Win It contest winners and will receive \$3,054. in new sports equipment in addition to a monetary donation in the amount of \$6,946.

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

COMMUNICATIONS

- a) Staff out of district requests for '26 - '27 school year

The superintendent advised that inquiries from multiple staff members were received requesting approval for their children to attend school in Waltham for the upcoming '26 - '27 school year. Dr. Mendonsa noted many of the students are currently attending school now as they received approval from the Committee last year. She added that the placement of these children is subject to school space and class sizes.

VOTED: On motion of Mrs. Coleman, seconded by Mr. Tarallo, to approve the staff out of district requests for the upcoming '26 - '27 school year. All in favor.

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

- a) Miscellaneous Personnel

New Hires:

- Brendan Vandalinda, Door Security, Waltham High School - effective January 20, 2026;
- Mary Petry, Resource Nurse, Whittemore Elementary School - effective January 26, 2026

Transfers and Promotions:

- Phillip Ranucci, Building Maintenance Person, Central Office - effective January 20, 2026

- b) Information

Dr. Mendonsa gave some athletic shout-outs to:

- WHS senior Michael Ayanyan for achieving his 100th career wrestling victory;
- WHS senior Ava Anderson for earning 100 career points in girls ice hockey; and
- WHS freshman Molly Whittier for also earning 100 career points in girls ice hockey.

Additionally, she highlighted two upcoming events for families:

- Wednesday, February 11th at 5:30pm, the WHS CTE Dept. will host its monthly virtual family forum showcasing its Cosmetology and Health Assisting programs;
- On Saturday, March 7th from 8am - 1:30pm, the district will hold its annual Parenting Awareness Conference at Waltham High School.

Information and links to join / register were included in the district's newsletter that was recently shared with families.

- c) Monthly District Enrollment

At the halfway point of the school year, student enrollment has stabilized at 5,655 and is just eleven students higher than the start of the school year.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

There was nothing new shared in the category of Curriculum and Instruction.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a) MSBA - Waltham High School Project

A future meeting of the Big Three is being scheduled soon.

- b) Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion The most recent meeting of the district's Equity Team took place on Monday afternoon. The committee continues to work in small groups and the superintendent will share more updates at an upcoming March meeting.
- c) Dual Language School Model and Reutilization of 617 Lexington Street The next meeting of the 617 Committee will take place Monday afternoon where the group will work to narrow down its focus.
- d) Waltham High School's Career and Technical Education (CTE) Department Interviews for the Early Childhood Coordinator position began today. Additionally, applications are now available and are due on March 2nd for any current freshman interested in applying for a CTE Tech 1 program for next year.
- e) Waltham Public Schools Revised Meal Charge Policy (Second Reading) **VOTED:** On motion of Mrs. Coleman, seconded by Mr. Tarallo, to approve the Second Reading of the Waltham Public Schools Revised Meal Charge Policy. All in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Possible Ratification of Memorandum of Agreement with Waltham Educators Association Mr. Tarallo thanked the WEA for working with the Committee to come to an agreement for a new contract. He highlighted some of the changes to the new three year agreement which will run until August 31, 2028: WEA staff will now work 183 days (instead of 182) starting in year two; also beginning in year two, teachers will be required to attend thirty hours of meetings and in year three, thirty-three hours; parental leave will now be twelve weeks with the first-five weeks being paid by the district (sick time will be applied to the remaining seven weeks); a two and a half percent COLA will apply to all three years; an increase will be made to stipends; paras will receive an hourly wage increase, and starting in year two, the last day of school will be a half day.
- VOTED:** On motion of Mr. Tarallo, seconded by Mrs. Coleman, to ratify the Memorandum of Agreement between the School Committee and the Waltham Educators Association. Roll Call: Mr. Zanghi - yes; Mr. Tarallo - yes; Mrs. Coleman - yes; Mrs. AlJammal - abstain; Ms. DeJoannis - yes, and Ms. Wong-Bigelow - yes.
- VOTED:** On motion of Mr. Tarallo, seconded by Mrs. Coleman, to request Mayor McCarthy, as Chair of the School Committee, request funding from the Waltham City Council for the amount needed to fund the salary increases agreed to by the School Committee and the Waltham Educators Association. All in favor.

FISCAL MATTERS

- a) Bills on
Warrant

VOTED: On motion of Mr. Tarallo, seconded by Mrs. Coleman, to pay the bills on warrant. All in favor.

AGENDA ITEMS
FOR FUTURE
MEETINGS

VOTED: On motion of Ms. DeJoannis, seconded by Mrs. Coleman, to add the WHS Quiz Team to an agenda for a future meeting. All in favor.

VOTED: On motion of Ms. DeJoannis, seconded by Mr. Zanghi, to recognize each of the WHS Quiz Team members and their coaches with a certificate. All in favor.

VOTED: On motion of Mr. Tarallo, seconded by Mrs. Coleman, to acknowledge the four Waltham High athletes who recently achieved 100 points in their sport. All in favor.

Mrs. Coleman requested an update on the changes to the Waltham High School schedule that are being considered.

VOTED: On motion of Mrs. Coleman, seconded by Mr. Tarallo, to add the Waltham High School schedule to the Unfinished Business section of the agenda. All in favor.

Ms. DeJoannis inquired about School Advisory Councils and school handbooks. Dr. Mendonsa explained that any requested changes to school handbooks can be discussed at advisory council meetings and can then be presented by school principals to the Committee in the spring.

ADJOURNMENT

VOTED: On motion of Mrs. Coleman, seconded by Mr. Tarallo, to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 7:35pm. All in favor.

Dr. Marisa Mendonsa
Clerk