

WALTHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Waltham, Massachusetts
REGULAR MEETING

MINUTES

AUGUST 12, 2026

The regular meeting of the Waltham School Committee convened at 5:03pm. 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 Mrs. AlJammal, seconded by Ms. DeJoannis to move to Executive Session at 5:03pm 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; 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, and 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 include Superintendent Dr. Mendonsa and HR Administrator Kate Peretz, and return to the regular meeting at 6:00 pm. All in favor.

Mayor McCarthy arrived at 5:04pm.

RECONVENE

The School Committee reconvened at 6:01pm. Present were Mr. Tarallo, Mr. Zanghi, Mrs. Coleman, Mrs. AlJammal, Ms. DeJoannis, Ms. Wong-Bigelow, and Mayor McCarthy. Mayor McCarthy presided.

The Committee recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor McCarthy announced the meeting was being recorded by WCAC.

VOTED: On motion of Mr. Tarallo, seconded by Mrs. Coleman, to move agenda items 6, 7 and 8 out of order. All in favor.

PUBLIC INPUT

Waltham High School parent Nicole Piche-Nicholas informed the members that a survey about the WHS schedule was shared with WPS families, students and alumni. An overview of the results indicated families valued providing feedback before the final proposal stage, data and evidence, and the majority of respondents preferred keeping an eight block schedule.

STUDENT COUNCIL
STUDENT INPUT

There were no students present at the meeting.

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

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

CONSENT AGENDA

Dr. Mendonsa presented the following Consent Agenda items:

- Minutes from the Special Meeting held on June 23, 2026;
- Minutes from the Regular Meeting held on June 17, 2026;

Retirements:

- Sheila Ponte, Stanley Elementary School, Drama Specialist - effective 09/05/2026;
- Margaret Santana, MacArthur Elementary School, Secretary - effective 08/30/2026;
- Camille Leblanc, Facilities Department, Districtwide Carpenter - effective 07/18/2026;
- Phillip Cacciatore, Whittemore Elementary School, Senior Custodian - effective 7/11/2026;
- Thomas Muizulis, Plympton Elementary School, Custodian - effective 7/8/2026

Resignations:

- Maria Morgan, Waltham High School, Dance Teacher - effective 06/30/2026;
- Patricia Glynn, Whittemore Elementary School, Long Term Sub (LTS) - effective 07/01/2026;
- Ashlee Kelly, Stanley Elementary School, Teacher - effective 06/30/2026;
- Ana Carneiro Pena, District-Wide, School Psychologist - effective 6/30/2026
- Jennifer-Ann Caruso, Northeast Elementary School, Kindergarten Teacher - effective 06/30/2026;
- Benjamin Calvanio, Kennedy Middle School, LTS Teacher - effective 06/30/2026;
- Krista Curley, MacArthur Elementary School, Teacher - effective 08/31/2026;
- Jennifer Ber, District-Wide, Teacher - effective 06/30/2026;
- Kristin Perez, Food Service Department, Secretary to the Director of Food Service 06/30/2026

VOTED: On motion of Ms. Wong-Bigelow, seconded by Mr. Tarallo, to approve the Consent Agenda. All in favor.

COMMUNICATIONS

- a) 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 requests for the 2026-2027 school year. All in favor.

**UNFINISHED
BUSINESS**

- a) Anti-Racism,
Diversity,
Equity and
Inclusion

Dr. Mendonsa provided a brief overview of the equity plan process which began with the equity audit. The plan encompasses the vision that Waltham Public Schools is “A district where every student is known, valued, and supported to achieve at the highest levels.”.

VOTED: On motion of Mrs. Coleman, seconded by Mr. Tarallo, to hear from off-committee members. All in favor.

Ms. Jackie Herrera explained the two important pillars that were the focus of the plan process: Instruction and Student Experience and Adult Learning and Development. She provided the key themes stemming from the audit results. Ms. Paula Mendoza shared the plan whereby students should be able to experience affirming, high-expectation learning environments, staff should feel well-equipped and supported, and the district should be able to close persistent opportunity gaps during the next three years.

Dr. Nadene Stein reviewed the recommendations from each of the priority pillars. Year one of the plan (this upcoming school year) will focus on building a strong foundation. Year two will include piloting, building and refining models, capacity and processes. The final year will see district-wide implementation, student-led programming, and institutionalizing equitable practices.

Dr. Mendonsa shared the plan for this year, how success will be measured and the governance and accountability. Ms. Haybi Garcia highlighted how the work and progress will be communicated to the community throughout the three year process.

The superintendent requested the School Committee approve the three year plan as the district’s guiding equity framework, and participate in the process.

Multiple questions were asked by School Committee members and the superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction responded. It was noted that a shared definition of “equity” be considered an important priority.

VOTED: On motion of Mrs. Coleman, seconded by Mr. Tarallo, to table this matter until the September 2, 2026 meeting. All in favor.

**CURRICULUM AND
INSTRUCTION**

- a) Highlights from
the 2025-2026
school year

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Shannon Conley shared an overview from each department from the 2025-2026 school year. DIBELS data shows that, at the elementary level, there is an increase in the number of students who are meeting or exceeding grade level benchmarks. At the secondary level, iReady results show an increase in the number of students meeting or exceeding grade level benchmarks. Dr. Conley provided AP Language and AP Literature exam scores.

Highlights from the Fine and Performing Arts Department, AP exam scores as well as plans for the upcoming school year were shared. Achievements and updates were

provided from the Multilingual / ESL department showing over 100 students met the FEL criteria during the year and there was an increase in higher proficiency levels at the secondary level. World Language highlights included: eighty-one students being awarded the Seal of Biliteracy, thirteen receiving the award with distinction, and over three dozen students participated in each the STAMP and AAPPL proficiency tests. The History and Social Studies department reported an increase in AP class enrollment along with an increase in AP scores.

Within Science, growth has been made in middle school assessment scores and in both physics and biology at the high school. Grant funds from PLTW and Open Sci Ed will support curriculum expansion and additional student opportunities. The Health and Wellness department confirmed it is fully functional at the high school and provided multiple highlights from the year.

The new Bridges math curriculum will be rolled out this year for elementary students and high school AP scores proved that just over 60% of students scored a three or above. Dr. Conley then provided a brief glimpse of things to come in the upcoming year.

The members shared feedback and asked some clarifying questions.

Mr. Tarallo left the meeting at 7:16pm and returned at 7:20pm.

VOTED: On motion of Mayor McCarthy, seconded by Ms. DeJoannis, to have the Curriculum and Instruction highlight presentation posted to the district and all school websites. All in favor.

The district's Early Childhood Coordinator Lauren Barwick updated the Committee on the department's progress since the spring. The new preschool classes at WHS are set to open this fall, staff has been hired and families have been registering. The Pre-K My Way curriculum, which is already being used at Northeast and Stanley, has been adopted. A short discussion followed about the role high school students will have within the new program at Waltham High.

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

a) Miscellaneous Personnel

New Hires:

- Alexandra Jameson, Elementary School Nurse, Plympton Elementary School - effective 02/22/2027;
- Doreen Reid, Special Education ETL, Districtwide - effective 8/31/2026;
- William Conard, Principal, Waltham High School - effective 7/1/2026;
- Noelle Stillman, Elementary Visual Art, Districtwide - effective 08/31/2026;
- Benjamin Crawford, Fiscal Coordinator, Central Office - effective 07/06/2026;
- Erica Gaudet, Substitute Nurse, Districtwide - effective 08/31/2026;
- Peter Raimo, Severe Special Education Teacher - Connections Program Northeast - effective 08/31/2026;
- Chelsea Miranda, Grants Coordinator, Central Office - effective 07/22/2026;
- Demi DiCarlo, Elementary Drama, Districtwide - effective 08/31/2026;
- Tyler Clardy, English Teacher, Waltham High School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Heather Pillar, LTS HS Teacher Visual Arts, Waltham High School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Kimora Mitchell, Grade 1 Classroom Teacher, Stanley Elementary School - effective 08/31/2026;

- Yvonne Corcoran, Board Certified Behavior Analyst, Districtwide - effective 08/31/2026;
- Mary Garrity, Elementary Visual Art Educator, Plympton Elementary School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Zalma Garcia, Dual Language (English/Spanish) Elementary Teacher, Dual Language School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Carolyn Imperato, Director of School Counseling, Districtwide - effective 08/31/2026;
- Kevin McCarthy Special Education Teacher - Pathways, Kennedy Middle School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Molly Stefany, Reading Specialist, MacArthur Elementary School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Kyle McGee, Grade 1 Classroom Teacher, Stanley Elementary School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Serena Gabriels, Elementary Visual Art Educator, Northeast Elementary School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Emily Raso, Severe Special Education Teacher - Connections Program Northeast Elementary School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Paula Ogalde Carmona, Bilingual School Adjustment Counselor (SAC) - effective 08/31/2026;
- Maria Jimenez Escobar, Assistant Coordinator of Student Intake and Registration Services, Central Office - effective 06/15/2026;
- Reham Ebrahim, ESL Teacher LTS, Whittemore Elementary School - effective 08/31/2026
- Jake Wisniewski, PE/Health Teacher, Kennedy Middle School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Daryl Cyr, Auto Technology Instructor, Waltham High School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Esther Rubin, Grade 4 Classroom Teacher, Stanley Elementary School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Isabel Powell, LTS Drama Teacher, Kennedy Middle School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Emily Stanton, English Teacher, Waltham High School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Lauren Barwick, Early Childhood Director, Districtwide - effective 05/18/2026;
- Kristen Marsh, SPED Teacher - Moderate Disabilities, Northeast Elementary School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Alex Greenwood, School Adjustment Counselor (SAC), MacArthur Elementary School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Aleigha Rivera, Special Education Paraprofessional, Whittemore Elementary School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Alexis Searles, Early Childhood Teacher, Waltham High School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Nathaniel Holden, Elementary Music Educator, District-wide - effective 08/31/2026;
- Emline Clairvil, School Psychologist, District-wide - effective 08/31/2026;
- Janeen Plomondon, Elementary ESL Teacher, Stanley Elementary School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Andrea Smith, TASC Special Education Paraprofessional, Stanley Elementary School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Damaris Estrada, Lead Preschool Teacher, Waltham Family School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Andrea Sherbakov, ESL Teacher LTS, Whittemore Elementary School - effective 08/31/2026;

- Rachel Petit, Kindergarten Teacher, Stanley Elementary School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Renata Carla De Castro Costa, TASC Special Education Paraprofessional, Stanley Elementary School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Elizabeth Murray, Administrator of Student Engagement and Discipline, Districtwide - effective 08/31/2026;
- Ariagna Pichardo, TASC Special Education Paraprofessional, Stanley Elementary School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Stephanie Lara-Reyes, TASC Special Education Paraprofessional, Stanley Elementary School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Gabrielle Hanley, Special Education Teacher, MacArthur Elementary School - effective 08/31/2026

Transfers and Promotions:

- Jennifer Arsenault, LTS 6th Grade Social Studies, Kennedy Middle School - effective 08/31/2026 - 11/01/2026 (approx);
- Courtney O'Malley, School Secretary, MacArthur Elementary School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Karla Panameno, Dual Language (English/Spanish) Long Term Sub, Dual Language School - effective 08/31/2026 - 12/01/2026 (approx);
- Alexandria Gately, Grade 4 Teacher, MacArthur Elementary School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Stephanie Mikelis, Multilingual Learning Coach, Waltham High School - effective 08/31/2026;
- Jesse Bastarache, Dance Teacher, Waltham High School - effective 08/31/2026

b) Information

The superintendent reminded the Committee that the first day of school for students in grades 1-12 is Wednesday, September 2nd and the first day for Pre-K and Kindergarten students is Thursday, September 10th. She also advised online registration is available for students looking to play a fall sport and tryouts begin the week of August 24th.

c) Evaluation Update

Dr. Mendonsa reviewed the year relative to her three evaluation goals and four DESE standards. She completed year two of the New Superintendent Induction Program (NSIP), worked on the development of the three year district equity plan, and assisted with the plans for future programming at 617 Lexington Street. She shared progress made and goals for the upcoming year within the areas of instructional leadership, management and operations, family and community engagement, and professional culture. Dr. Mendonsa reviewed what the year, through its ups and downs, has taught her and then her self-evaluation.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS (cont.)b) Dual Language School Model and Reutilization of 617 Lexington Street

Nothing new was shared in this area.

- c) Waltham High School's Career and Technical Education (CTE) Department Interviews for the Assistant Superintendent of Career and Technical Education (CTE) K-12 position will be taking place next week.
- d) Waltham High School Schedule The WHS Schedule Committee held its working day in July and Dr. Conard will now take the lead on this project.
- Mayor McCarthy emphasized the importance of stakeholder involvement before the final recommendation stage and also transparency during the process. The superintendent confirmed options will be shared with the community and an opportunity for feedback will be provided.
- e) Enrollment, Space and Data in the Waltham Public Schools There was nothing new shared in this category.
- f) Superintendent's Evaluation Mrs. Coleman reminded the members of the upcoming deadline to submit their individual superintendent evaluations to her and of the remainder of the process.
- g) Artificial Intelligence (AI) Guidance Dr. Conley reviewed the proposed Artificial Intelligence (AI) Guidelines for staff and students and fielded questions and comments from the members.
- Mrs. Coleman left the meeting at 7:58pm and returned at 8:02pm.

VOTED: On motion of Ms. Wong-Bigelow, seconded by Mrs. Coleman, to adopt the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Guidelines as presented. All in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no New Business presented at the meeting.

FISCAL MATTERS

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

AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Ms. Wong-Bigelow requested the school entrance age be reviewed. It was noted that the School Committee's policy states a child must be five years old by September 1 in order to enroll in kindergarten. A short conversation followed.

Mr. Tarallo indicated he believes the 617 Lexington Street building needs a name and an identity. He asked that this be discussed at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

VOTED: On motion of Mrs. Coleman, seconded by Ms. DeJoannis, to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 8:13pm. All in favor.

Marisa Mendonsa
Clerk