



SC Spotlight

Topics of the Hamilton Wenham Regional School Committee

Early November 2015

High School Graduation Policy Change

At its October 1st meeting, the School Committee unanimously approved a change in the District's Graduation Requirements policy. The change focused on a reduction in the number of Wellness credits a student will need to meet high school graduation requirements (2.0 credits for the class of 2019 and beyond). All students must take Wellness every year; this policy reduces the requirement from a full year to a half year of Wellness. To review the policy, please go to the District web site www.hwschools.net. Go to District Information tab, select Policies, go to Section H Student and scroll down to Graduation Requirements policy.

Here come Transfer Goals!

At the October 1st SC meeting, Dr. Harvey and his leadership team presented the District Improvement Plan and each school's improvement plan, which this year include transfer goals. What are transfer goals? They encourage the kind of understanding, knowledge, and skills that serve students for the long run; i.e., what we want students to be able to do when they confront new challenges – both in and outside of school.

There are a small number of overarching, long-term transfer goals in each subject area. For example, a long-term aim in mathematics is for students to be able to solve “real world” problems on their own and a long-term transfer goal in history is for students to apply the lessons of history when considering contemporary issues.

The idea behind transfer goals is to educate students so that they're able to apply their learning to new and varied situations without being directed by a teacher or other adult. Transfer is about independent performance in context. The goal is to guide students to effectively draw from their repertoire of intelligence to handle new contexts independently. For more detail, check out high school Principal Eric Tracy's blog on the topic here: <https://hwgenerals.wordpress.com/>

HWRHS Students Named “Commended Students”

Congratulations to the 6 HWRHS students who were commended for their strong performance on the PSAT by the National Merit Scholarship Program. Esther Darko, Mariah Manter, Annabel Rutherford, Kate Toner, Ian Worstell, and Jeanine Zheng have been named Commended Students in the 2016 National Merit Scholarship Program. Commended students are those whose scores have placed them in the top 5% of the more than 1.5 million students who took the PSAT in the fall of 2014. Well done!

School Committee on the Web; Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How do I find the School Committee online?

A: Head straight here: <http://www.hwschools.net/page.cfm?p=1653>. Or you can get to the page from any of the District’s school websites by clicking the leftmost tab, District Information, and choosing School Committee from the list of choices (about 2/3rds of the way down the column).

Q: How do I find a list of current School Committee members?

A: The names, titles, addresses and emails of current members are listed on the Committee’s home page: <http://www.hwschools.net/page.cfm?p=1653>.

Q: When and where does the School Committee meet? Is the public able to attend?

A: The Committee generally meets the first and third Thursdays of every month, with exceptions for school vacations and other holidays. The Committee also meets more frequently during budget season (Jan. - March).

School Committee meetings are listed on the School District Calendar, here: <http://www.hwschools.net/page.cfm?p=2179>

Except for special circumstances, meetings begin at 7:15 p.m. and are held in the multipurpose room of the Buker Elementary School at 1 School Street in Wenham.

The public is invited to attend all meetings, except during the infrequent times when the Committee adjourns for an executive session.

Q: How can I find out what's on the agenda for any given School Committee meeting?

A: Agendas are posted on the Committee's website at least 48 hours before a meeting convenes -- most typically, agendas are available by 4 p.m. of the Tuesday before a Thursday meeting. To find them, head straight here: <http://www.hwschools.net/page.cfm?p=2282>. Or navigate to the page this way:

1. From the School Committee webpage (<http://www.hwschools.net/page.cfm?p=1653>), choose the third option in the left hand column: Agendas, Minutes and Handouts
2. Choose 2015-2016
3. Select the appropriate meeting date from the list of agendas in the far left column.

Q: How should I communicate with the School Committee if I have a question, concern or opinion about an agenda item?

Attend a meeting! The public is always welcome at School Committee meetings. Time is set aside at the beginning of every meeting, right after the Pledge of Allegiance, for Citizens' Concerns. This is a time to ask a question about a particular agenda item, or suggest a topic for future discussion.

In addition, public comments are often invited for particular agenda items, as determined by the Chair.

Finally, citizens are invited to email SC_COMMUNICATIONS@HWSCHOOLS.NET with questions and concerns, or to email individual members of the Committee, as listed on the School Committee's website (<http://www.hwschools.net/page.cfm?p=1653>). Please note that questions and concerns regarding curriculum, policies and operations at specific District Schools should be addressed to that school's Principal.

Q: I can't make a particular meeting in person. How can I learn what is discussed and/or voted on?

All meetings are videotaped by HWCAM. You can view them live on television as they're occurring -- Verizon Channel 36 or Comcast Channel 8.

In addition, the meetings are available for later viewing from HWCAM's website: <http://www.hwcam.org/>.

To find a meeting, click the Gvt. Access tab, find the meeting from the list that appears, and click the word VIEW under the meeting name to start playback of the video. If you don't see the meeting listed, use the calendar to navigate back to the appropriate date.

In addition, School Committee meetings are frequently covered by the local news media -- e.g., the Hamilton-Wenham Chronicle, Hamilton-Wenham Patch, and Salem News.

Upcoming Topics being discussed by the School Committee

- November 18, 7:00 pm (Buker School Multipurpose Room). Joint meeting with the Hamilton and Wenham Finance Committees
- November 19, 7:15pm (Buker School Multipurpose Room).
 - YTD Financial Report
 - Report on District, SC and Superintendent Goal Progress for 2015/2016
- December 3, 7:15 pm
 - Public Hearing on School Choice
 - SC Vote on to participate in School Choice for FY17

We welcome questions or comments, please contact us at: sc_communications@hwschools.net