



# Weymouth

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## PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### Weymouth School Committee

#### BUDGET SUB COMMITTEE

Meeting held on [ZOOM](#)

May 6, 2020

Meeting Minutes

*Approved 5/14/20*

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**Members In Attendance:** John Sullivan (Chair), Lisa Belmarsh, Carrie Palazzo, Rebecca Sherlock-Shangraw, Kathy Curran, Tracey Nardone

**Members Absent:** Mayor Hedlund

**Also Present:** Superintendent Jennifer Curtis-Whipple, Assistant Superintendent Brian Smith, Assistant Superintendent Robert Wargo,

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**The Meeting Came to Order At 6:00pm.**

Chair Sullivan gave an overview of how public comment will work and explained that different from Town Council's meeting School Committee allows for public comment when not in executive session.

This is a working meeting and no decisions will be made on the budget at this meeting.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to refer the Open Meeting Law Complaint dated May 1, 2020 filed by Gerard Mackin against Weymouth School Committee, Chair Belmarsh to Attorney Joe Emerson. Seconded by Mrs. Curran. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to refer the Open Meeting Law Complaint dated April 30, 2020 filed by Peter Farrell against Weymouth School Committee, Chair Belmarsh to Attorney Joe Emerson. Seconded by Mrs. Curran. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to refer the Open Meeting Law Complaint dated April 29, 2020 filed by Patrick Schaefer against Weymouth School Committee, Chair Belmarsh to Attorney Joe Emerson. Seconded by Mrs. Curran. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

Dr. Sullivan read into the record a statement of the outlining the timeline and impacts of circumstances the committee now finds itself. This statement is attached to these minutes.

Reassurance was given that the potential closing of the Nash School is officially off the table.

Mrs. Curran commented that she didn't have knowledge of the previous night's press release regarding Universal Full Day Kindergarten which stated the Committee was unwilling to go back on their promise, stating that it was unfortunate and not correct. She stated the committee should do their due diligence and that Full Day Kindergarten should be placed on the future agenda.

Dr. Sullivan gave instructions on how public comment will be handled; adding your name and address in the Chat which is only shared with the host.

### **Review Town of Weymouth 2021 Budget Submission Impact on Weymouth Schools FY21 Revised Budget Proposal**

Assistant Superintendent Smith gave an overview of the Presentation. Topics included the budget timeline over the last year, level services numbers, non union increases, the budget gap, IT obligations, and potential reduction and savings options. The proposal is attached to these minutes

The Superintendent explained that items listed as compliance are due to federal/state mandates, grants that are no longer available, or due to contractual obligations. Chapter 74 and the robotics CTE program was mentioned.

The town offered to pay for the IT obligations as mentioned in the town budget management meeting.

An overview of one time savings in substitutes, utilities and transportation was given.

Mr. Smith advised that the cost of kindergarten is \$1.2 million. This number includes the cost of half day kindergarten at \$337,100. Remaining balance can be paid by depleting the Kindergarten revolving account and will be titled as a Pilot Program, no expectation to continue. This would waive fees for 400 families.

An overview of potential reduction and savings was given. The Superintendent stated that she feels that they are not educationally sound but understands that difficult decisions must be made during these uncertain times.

Non union salaries will be frozen.

Mrs. Nardone verified that the compliance requirement hasn't changed pre to post COVID. Dr. Curtis-Whipple advised that if numbers of a population served by a compliance item decreased or increased the compliance needs to change.

Mrs. Nardone double checked that the cost of ½ day kindergarten of \$337K is included in the \$1.2 million and mentioned that transportation costs could increase in the fall. Redistricting at this time for Nash/Hamilton was also discussed.

Ms. Sherlock-Shangraw inquired what the Superintendent thought of the potential reduction/savings on slides 10 and 11. Dr. Curtis-Whipple restated that she does not believe they are educationally sound. Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw shared that this is the most difficult conversation and meeting that she's been a part of since joining the committee.

Ms. Palazzo thanked Dr. Sullivan for the way he set the tone of the meeting. She inquired if fundraising (group or parent councils), money from textiles or principal gift accounts could be used for IT. The Superintendent advised that it could be looked into, however it's hard to put parameters on how councils spend their money and it may present an equity issue. Ms. Palazzo suggested evaluating the efficacy of the Pilot program and gathering data. Dr. Curtis-Whipple shared that in addition to data already collected, financial data could be gathered as well.

Mrs. Curran inquired if any IT equipment from Chapman could be used. Brett Lindholm advised that he could get an exact number and knew of a few viable projectors and interactive displays that could be repurposed. The Superintendent added that equipment will follow teachers who are moving as well.

Mrs. Curran also questioned the reduction of the CTE programs. Dr. Curtis-Whipple advised that no decisions have been made and that Julianne Garmache would heavily weigh-in. Difficulty of finding a robotics teacher was discussed.

Mrs. Curran thanked everyone for their hard work. She questioned the Weycare revolving account number and understood that Weycare employees have to be furloughed as there are no students in the schools but does not support cutting the Weycare Assistant Director position . In regard to the Financial Pilot of Full Day Kindergarten, that since COVID has crashed the budget it should be put back on the agenda, even though she voted 'yes' in November. Suggestion was made to use the Kindergarten revolving account for iPads and transportation. She further stated that these are unprecedented times and have to do what's in the best interest of the students; all the students, not just the 400 incoming kindergarten students. Mrs. Curran declared that there is so much unknown right now.

Mrs. Nardone shared that she has concerns with schools sharing principals. Stating that with cuts, no one wins. She also reminded that the Kindergarten revolving account could only be used for expenses like kindergarten iPads and kindergarten transportation.

Chair Belmarsh thanked the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent for their presentation, for doing everything that was asked of them by the school committee in revising the budget and taking Nash off the table. She also thanked them for their professionalism during the previous night's town budget management meeting. Ms Belmarsh agreed that a cost analysis of the Pilot Kindergarten program is a good idea and suggested reaching out to the town for specifics of their offer to help with IT.

The process of transferring money from one account line to another was discussed.

The Superintendent advised that John McCleod was asked to attend a school committee meeting to discuss measures regarding Abigail Adams.

Dr. Sullivan added that the cuts listed are more than is needed and that financial decisions will be made based on what's best educationally. He stated that there is a clear difference in opinion regarding Universal Full Day Kindergarten and that the state is asking for help in recovery for both educational and financial relief and that could happen especially for the 400 kindergarten families. Dr. Sullivan further stated that the School Committee hired a good administration that will make and set educational priorities that will be in the best interest of students' education.

### **Consider a possible resolution to urge more federal funding relief for schools.**

Chair Belmarsh read into the record a resolution in support of federal funding relief for schools. That resolution is attached to these minutes.

A change from "K-12" to "PreK-12" will be made on the resolution.

Motion by Chair Belmarsh that we as a school committee resolve to seek additional state funding through this resolution. Motion seconded by Dr. Sherlock Shangraw. Roll Call Vote passed unanimously.

A subsequent motion was made by Mrs. Curran to take out the paragraph 'economists forecast the recession to be deep and long lasting'. Subsequent motion was not seconded.

### **Public Comment**

Dr. Sullivan reiterated that the committee will receive comments during this time and to try to keep comments under 3 minutes.

-Sharon Ennis, 163 Academy Ave.-read comments into the record

-Todd Murray-42 Seabury Ave.-read comments into the record

- Caitlin McInnes-21 Neck St.,-read comments into the record
- Emily Jackson-Darosa read comments into the record.
- Danielle Graziano, 430 Talbot Street, inquired about ESY (Extended School Year).  
Superintendent advised at this time might be done remotely and will do what is needed to provide what is stated on an IEP (Individual Education Program)
- Christine O'Hara, clarified about Assistant Curriculum and Special Education Director
- Mark Ricci, questioned where the chromebooks came from that were given out during COVID to accommodate remote learning came from. The Superintendent advised classroom carts from AAMS and WHS were used with the expectation that they will be returned.
- Mike Murphy, 245 Front St and WEA President commented on how the potential cuts could impact the more than 700 members including Unit A, D, & B and that principals should be in each building. Further sharing that if cuts should happen, it should be at central administration as it has the least impact on students, mentioning the curriculum directors, special education assistant director, instruction and data positions and that he is not anti administration pointing out that those positions can be replaced mid stream unlike teachers hoping cuts would be temporary. He is in support of Universal Full Day Kindergarten.
- Sue Peters, former school committee member complimented Dr. Curtis-Whipple and Mr. Smith for their professionalism and Chair Belmarsh for her oral reading. Suggested getting Mass Association of School Committees (MASC) involved for federal funding resolution. Mrs. Peters stated that Free Full Day Kindergarten is not a luxury but a necessity.  
Dr. Sullivan advised that MASC is in support of the resolution.
- Megan Carr, shared her hopes that the sharing of principals between buildings does not happen and inquired about future cuts. Dr. Sullivan advised that the Committee can't make promises at this time as the situation is fluid.
- Alicia Baker. Thanked the Superintendent and the supportive committee members for working to push through Full Day Kindergarten. Mrs. Curran stated that she is in support of full day kindergarten just not free full day kindergarten.
- Gary MacDougall, 131 Southern Ave, shared his support for Universal Full Day Kindergarten and expressed his thanks to the school committee for dedication to improve education to better the town of Weymouth. Mr. MacDougall expressed that having UFDK will eliminate students going to the charter schools.
- Jeanette Begley-expressed disagreement in cutting the position of the Assistant Director of WeyCare as it would set the program back
- Jilly Berry, clarified that the FTE changes at the Johnson school are not cuts but a change in funding source.  
Dr. Sullivan reiterated that tonight's meeting is for discussion and no votes will be taken regarding potential reduction/savings.
- Casi Belmarsh, 400 Union St-Hamilton School teacher, shared her support for Universal Full Day Kindergarten pointing out that the same material covered in a full day program is difficult to do in a ½ day setting.  
Dr. Sullivan expressed his thanks to teachers and staff for inventing education for K-12
- Ruth Emet, shared her support for UFDK

-Daniel Connolly expressed disagreement in cutting the position of the Assistant Director of WeyCare as it would set the program back

Chair Belmarsh suggested a committee or subcommittee involving a member of the school committee to discuss what learning will look like for 2020-2021.

Mrs. Nardone expressed her thanks to Mike Manning and the custodial staff for all of their hard work with locker and room clean out.

The Superintendent gave a big shout out to John Barker for the enormous work he's done and expressed her thanks to everyone for all of the tremendous work being done behind the scenes.

The School Committee expressed their support for the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent. Mr. Smith communicated his thanks to Assistant Superintendent Wargo for all of his work as well as the curriculum team.

**Meeting adjourned at 9:03pm.** Motion by Mrs. Curran. Seconded by Mrs. Nardone. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'John Sullivan', written over a horizontal line.

John Sullivan

**Documents Attached to These Minutes:**

- Statement from John Sullivan
- Statement from Sharon Ennis
- Statement from Caitlin McInnes
- Statement from Emily Jackson-Darosa
- Statement from Todd Murray

## **Statement from John Sullivan**

I want to begin by orienting us all to where we are in the process of revising our budget and how we got here. As the mayor and chief of staff have mentioned in a couple of meetings recently, forecasts available in the fall for the financial state of the town were lower than they had been in recent years, so the school committee responded in late March by voting in a level service budget that was only a few hundred thousand off of what the mayor's office ultimately proposed. I don't mean to shrug off a hundred thousand dollars, but these are gaps we are accustomed to filling each year.

Because it is the job of the school committee to advocate for the needs of the schools, it is not unusual for us to make an 'ask' that is a bit higher than what is ultimately available from the town. It is our way of communicating our needs, even if those needs can not be met in the moment. Typically, we receive the budget from the mayor and then we set about the very complex and high-stakes process of setting educational priorities and using that information to make our spending fit the money that the town has available to give. This typically happens in meetings of this budget sub-committee and continues into June, when we make our final vote on the school budget after Town Meeting which is typically in the last week or two of May.

The school administration and school committee have recently been criticized by other members of our own town government of being fiscally irresponsible because we never modified our February budget. First, we don't have a February budget - we voted our budget on March 26 -when the magnitude of this crisis was not yet as clearly in focus as it is today. The three weeks between when we submitted our request to the mayor and when the mayor then presented his new post-Covid budget were some of the most eventful weeks in human history, with a global pandemic and resulting near-complete collapse of the global economy taking shape. Those who expected a fully formed new proposal to come out of the schools' central office in that time are not considering the fact that this leadership team - which is measurably very small compared to other communities with similar numbers of students, did nothing less in that time than marshal all 1000+ employees of the Weymouth Public Schools to completely reinvent K-12 education, including the way we provide food to

impoverished families. Lunch doesn't sound like a big deal until you realize that the free lunch provided by schools is often the only meal some impoverished students have in a given day. Moving to remote learning is a crisis in starvation as well as education, and both parts of that crisis have been admirably addressed by every employee of the Weymouth Public Schools from the Superintendent to all the cafeteria workers and van drivers who are getting food to our kids. In the meantime, Union officials, administration and the School Committee - especially Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw in her role as chair of collective bargaining - wrote and approved entirely new protocols on working conditions for all eight union bargaining units, providing continuity of pay as requested by the state and giving everyone important new tasks to do in support of this new world.

As the schools were doing all of this work, the town was doing the brutally difficult work of completely re-writing the entire town budget to account for the massive economic collapse that so many of us are experiencing every day. They were able to increase school funding, selecting us as one of only three departments in town who would receive additional money in Fiscal Year 21. I am grateful for that additional money, but it is our duty in this sub-committee to recognize the significant gap between what we need and what we are able to get during this emergency and to try to make changes to make those two numbers meet.

Despite this impossible situation, the administration got to work trying to come up with scenarios to make the school budget work. Every year, the administration gets a budget from the mayor, comes up with scenarios to try to bridge the gap, and comes to this budget sub committee with their proposals. This is still the process this year. Before bringing anything to this committee, employees around the school district always do a great deal of work to prepare reliable data and expert opinions to bring to us. This work is unseen by the public and even by members of the committee, but it is a significant effort every year. You wouldn't believe the work that can go into a plan that has to be explained in ten slides at a meeting. Because of the devastating gap between what we need and what we know we will have, the changes to our budget this year are going to be incredibly painful - there's no two ways about it. As the administration worked to come up with scenarios to present to this sub-committee, they realized that our most financially inefficient cost center in the district was the



Nash School. Students there have enjoyed artificially small class sizes relative to their peers in other schools so moving them would mean bringing them more in line with the educational experience of other elementary schools. No-one wants to see a school closed, especially a superintendent whose first teaching job was in that actual building and an assistant superintendent whose school closed when he was at Hunt Primary. That said, it was a fiscally and educationally responsible proposal to deal with the emergency in which we find ourselves. Right now, before I get too far into this, I want to reassure everyone that the administration has taken the Nash plan off the table. The Weymouth Public Schools and especially its School Committee are an organization of the people, by the people and for the people and when we saw the public response to the plan, we knew it was not feasible. I'm just outlining the process, of which the Nash situation has been the most visible element.

Again, this is all planning in preparation for this meeting, just more painful. As soon as admin figured out a school closing might be among the possible cost cutting measures to be brought before this sub-committee, Dr. Curtis Whipple made the compassionate decision to notify the staff via a live meeting and to notify the parents at the same time. It was important for these constituencies to know first so they wouldn't hear it through the grapevine. That would not have been fair to the people affected. Of course, immediately after those meetings, elected officials were upset that they weren't notified and some made statements to the press without first talking to anyone in the schools. The practice of notifying people whose jobs and whose children's educations on the line was the right decision, but I should have advocated for notification to elected officials. I apologize to my peers on the town side for not thinking of that during these rapidly evolving events.

This was one week ago today. The next day, the full School Committee held a meeting where nearly seven hundred people called in. The administration and the committee heard the reasoning people brought to the table, agreed with some elements of it - most especially the unknown nature of space needs in the next school year - and they withdrew the plan. I think the first announcement, though well-intentioned was not perfect, and I have acknowledged my role in that, but for what it's worth I do think the intelligence and humility of the administration (that's not me - them) made them quick

learners and they did better with informing everyone about the change to the plan a couple of days later.

A reminder - all of this activity of the last week was part of the preparation admin had to do to get to this meeting tonight. The post-covid town budget is only nine days old. The plan always was to bring the options to this committee, but this is the first time this sub-committee has been able to meet to discuss the ramifications of this nine day old budget. As soon as Town Council learned of the Nash component of the possible proposal, they inserted a meeting of the Budget / Management sub-committee in between the school committee meeting and this meeting. It is their right to do so, but some members of this committee expressed a desire to meet to consider our options before it went to Town Council. This was a totally reasonable request. Again, normally schools don't go before Town Council until late May in even a normal year, and under those circumstances, we would have lots of meetings to prepare. Unfortunately, the call for these meetings came primarily after Thursday night's School Committee meeting and any meeting of this body requires that advance notice be published on the town web site not less than two business days before the meeting. Two business days after Thursday night or Friday morning would have been Tuesday night (also known as last night), and we were already required to meet with the Town Council last night. There was at least one suggestion that we use the emergency provision in the Open Meeting Law to meet on Monday night, but because final decisions on the budget are not imminent, the only so-called emergency we could cite would be our desire to meet and get information before the Town Council got it. The AG would certainly not call that an emergency.

So - at long last - we have reached today. I am hopeful that we will spend this meeting looking forward. This sub-committee is typically where the political posturing is set aside and we roll up our metaphorical sleeves to do the hard work of balancing a budget as we are required to do by law. I am hoping we are able to have a meeting tonight focused on problem-solving and that we can find ways to make this horrible time have as little impact on all of our students as we can.

## STATEMENT FROM EMILY JACKSON DAROSA

Emily Jackson-Darosa

20 Ashmont Street

Weymouth Ma

May 6, 2020

Dear Weymouth School Committee Members:

I have been a Weymouth resident for 20 years and my 2 children attend WPS. They are in 10th and 12th grades this year. When the pay option of FDK was introduced it was not an option for my family because I could not justify the cost while I was working from home but I cannot imagine planning for my child to attend free full day K and have that ripped away suddenly.

I am strongly in favor of the Free Full Day Kindergarten Program next year as a pilot program. The program, from my understanding, is already funded by the revolving account for next year and 400 families are depending on it. Some people may have even changed their work and living situations or moved to Weymouth with this in mind. Whatever the reason these are 400 Weymouth kids and their families now in limbo.

The FFDK program was already approved by vote and offered to families. These families have already made arrangements for the fall. Expecting these families to now reapply for FFDK, possibly lose their spot, and charge them thousands of dollars at a time when many of these families have lost their jobs is beyond cruel and I fear this will drive families out of Weymouth and in fact I have been told people will leave.

Not only is having the FFDK program this fall the right thing to do by those particular Weymouth families, it should be funded going forward. It is in the town's best interest to invest in its education system and to be competitive with other school districts, most of which offer FFDK and have for years in Massachusetts.

Programs like FFDK will have a positive long term impact on the town. When families are deciding whether to move to Weymouth, it will be programs like this that seal the deal. This will attract young families to Weymouth and perhaps slow the wide open valve of families leaving WPS for other better options.

I thank you all for your hard work for the students, families and Weymouth community.

Sincerely,

Emily Jackson-Darosa

STATEMENT FROM CAITLIN MCINNES

Dear School committee,

I am writing this email and request it be read into record at the budget subcommittee on May 6, 2020. I apologize that I am unable to be in attendance and thank you for hearing my comment via email.

My name is Caitlin McInnes, I live at 20 Neck St and consider myself an active, informed parent in the community.

To start I would like to commend you all for your behavior during last Thursday's meeting. Prior to that meeting there were many words spoken and posted on social media that could be described as personal attacks against many of you. Yet, as Thursday's meeting began you presented your information as factual numbers with no attack back to those against you! In the words of Hilary Clinton; "When they went low, you went high" and that is never easy in the face of such an emotional situation!

I do want to speak briefly to how sad I am that this entire budget situation has been painted as a picture of Free Full Day Kindergarten vs. all else. As someone who followed this process I believe you made a responsible well thought out decision in a way that would impact the operational budget as minimally as possible and in a slow progression. I am sad that the current covid-19 pandemic has impacted all budgets and ours so significantly. Our district has been on a positive trajectory for many years and I want nothing more than to see that continue. Although, there are many areas where this will not be possible I am pleased and grateful that you found a way to offer FFDK, at the very least as a pilot, for next year AND I ask that you all please vote to continue moving forward with this plan for a few reasons.

First, to go backward for next year would require excessive clerical efforts. I am not sure how, as a district, you would figure out the lottery, deposits, sliding scales, etc.

This is a process that typically takes 2+ months of work and there are only 6 weeks left in the school year, not to mention you need it solidified by end of May to ensure personnel are let go or hired per contractual obligations.

Second, while I respect the impact the pandemic has had on the town budget, this same financial impact is happening to individual families. It would be a travesty to now take away access to a program that is so imperative that only 38 communities in the state do not currently offer it.

Third, I have heard the idea posed that you could use some of the revolving account to reduce the cost of FFDK and still offer it free for those who can not afford it (e.g. on a sliding scale). While this seems like a good alternative I again worry about the parents who will take that opportunity to decline full day and then you will have to manage those who want half day and those who do not. If only 15 families want half day how do you manage that across the district!?

Finally, and most important to me (I choke up as I write this), our early childhood children have also been out of their programs for 7 weeks. By the time they return in the fall they will have had 6 months of no curriculum, no organized play for social development, no arts and crafts for fine motor, no playground time to promote gross motor skills; they too will be behind their normal targeted standards. Worse, most students attend private preschools who are not able to offer home programming leaving parents to find their own ways of educating their children (if they are even able to, most probably don't have the resources). Therefore, to deny the opportunity of free full day kindergarten for next year is denying children access to the same things our students in grade 1-12 will receive, a chance to catch back up!

I know this is a very controversial and questionable idea. However, by announcing this as a pilot I feel it protects the district should there be no funding next year for FY22 while also, and more importantly, protecting the children who will so desperately need more time on learning as they recover from 6-months of no learning program.

I respect the perspective of committee members and town councilors who are so on the fence or completely against this. BUT I pray if nothing else they hear my fourth and final point above. Many of you are not educators. I am. I see first hand the impact

no early childhood programming has on students, and many times it results in a need for retention! Please do not burden our programs in the future with students who will need more support. More importantly please do not burden our children and their families with a feeling of not being important enough! Please vote yes for the Pilot Free Full Day Kindergarten program for the 2020-2021 school year!

Thank you for your time and hearing my comment.

#### STATEMENT FROM SHARON ENNIS

I am asking that this statement be read tonight May 6th before school committee on my behalf.

My name is Sharon Ennis and I live at 163 Academy Avenue.

I am asking tonight that School Committee moves forward with their pilot of Universal Free Full Day Kindergarten for this fall, September 2020. Last November, School Committee listened to their constituents, the families of Weymouth, and voted to offer Universal Free Full Day Kindergarten, taking us off the list of just 38 communities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts that fail to do so. The overwhelming response from the community was positive, this was access that children and needed and deserved.

Now fast-forward to May and here School Committee is finalizing the SY 2020-2021 under different financial circumstances that were anticipated in November. Those financial circumstances have not only changed for the Town of Weymouth, but also the families, nearly 400 of them, who so eagerly registered their children for Universal Free Full Day Kindergarten. At a time when families are facing unemployment and uncertain finances they are now faced with the possibility of losing access to full day kindergarten for their child. It seems foolish to me to leave \$800,000 sitting in a revolving account in spite of the nearly 400 children who will benefit from piloting Universal Free Full Day Kindergarten.

I know that some on Town Council said last evening at the meeting that they had philosophical differences with continuing to offer Universal Free Full Day

Kindergarten, even as a pilot, with the possibility of tough economic times ahead. As I watched, I thought, why isn't anyone speaking to the elephant in the room when it comes to finances- charter school reimbursements. In school year 2019, Weymouth Public Schools paid just under \$1,000,000 in charter school reimbursements, up nearly \$400,000 from the previous school year. South Shore Charter School offers Universal Free Full Day Kindergarten and has for several years. So if members of town government are looking for ways to put money back into the school department budget, I found the leak. We need to offer Universal Free Full Day Kindergarten so that families do not feel like they need to look elsewhere right at the beginning of their child's education to have access to the education they deserve.

Thank you for your time,

Sharon Ennis

#### Statement from Todd Murray

Todd Murray

42 Seabury Street

Weymouth, MA 02191

May 6, 2020

Weymouth School Committee Members

111 Middle Street

Weymouth, MA 02189

Dear Weymouth School Committee Members:

I have been a resident of Weymouth for 11 years and will have 2 sons in the Weymouth school system next year. Our youngest son is enrolled for kindergarten this fall at Wessagusset Elementary School. We are strongly in favor of the Full Free Day Kindergarten Program next year and beyond. The program is already funded and should move forward for many reasons, but a few key ones I've listed below.

The FFDK program was already approved by vote and offered to 400+ families. These families have already made arrangements for the fall. Expecting these families to now reapply for FFDK, possibly lose their school of choice, and charge them thousands of extra dollars in an economy where many of these families have lost their jobs is reckless.

Not only is having FFDK program this fall the right thing to do by the Weymouth families, it should be funded going forward. It is in the towns best interest to invest in its education system and to be competitive with other Massachusetts school districts, most of which (86%) offer FFDK.

Keeping programs like FFDK will have a positive long term impact on the town. When families are deciding whether to stay or move from Weymouth, it will be programs like this that make the difference. Please invest in Weymouth. My family would like to stay in Weymouth, but will not if the town will not support public education adequately.

Sincerely,  
Todd Murray