

Update from the School Committee.....

The School Committee met this past Monday, June 4, in Town Hall. A key topic was presentations of School Improvement Plans ([Cunniff](#), [Hosmer](#), [Lowell](#)) by the elementary schools. Principals and site council members from each school presented current initiatives as well as plans for the coming year. Topics covered a broad range of happenings at the schools, including curriculum enhancements, co-teaching, a new social-emotional program, and parent communication.

A second presentation was made by the Watertown Community Foundation. The Community Foundation recently merged with the Watertown Education Foundation. The merged organization, which continues with the name of Watertown Community Foundation, will maintain the grant program for teachers that both have operated in the past. In the last two years, \$70,000 in grants were provided to teachers. In addition to its work in education, the Community Foundation will continue its support for other areas of community development in Watertown.

In other business, the School Committee reviewed a [draft memorandum of agreement](#) that will create a new Department of Public Buildings, merging the responsibility for both town and school buildings under one department and director. The Town Council will review a draft as well, then the Council and School Committee will need to agree to the same document. It will take several years to fully implement changes, but the new department will provide better coordination of building services.

The School Committee also approved a new [fee schedule](#) for the use of school facilities, such as the high school auditorium, by non-school groups. Effective July 1, 2018, the new fee schedule continues the current level of fees for Watertown non-profit organizations, but increases by 25% the fees for non-profits from outside Watertown, and by 75% for for-profit organizations. Along with a new fee structure, the School Department has created a detailed set of [rules and regulations](#) to govern the use of school facilities by non-school groups.

In other agenda items, 16 seniors were recognized for completing 12 seasons of sports – every season for four years of high school. The School Committee also heard an update of the work of the School Building Committee, which meets this Wednesday at 6 PM in Town Hall. The focus of the Building Committee continues to be on possible renovations and new construction at the three elementary schools. Also, the Superintendent noted that searches for a new Middle School principal and Lowell assistant principal are continuing with interviews of candidates in the next two weeks.

In upcoming meetings, the Policy Subcommittee meets on June 5th at 6:30 in 101 Phillips Building; the Budget & Finance Subcommittee meets on June 6th at 5:30 in Town Hall; and the School Committee meets on June 18th at 7 PM in Town Hall.

Additional information is available on the Watertown Public Schools website at <https://sites.google.com/a/watertown.k12.ma.us/watertown-k12-ma-us/>.

John Portz

Chair, Watertown School Committee