

# WELLESLEY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

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## Reaffirmation of the Wellesley Public Schools Core Values, Mission and Vision

There has been a lot of community conversation in recent weeks about “academic excellence.” The Wellesley School Committee would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to academic excellence, as well as the other three core values of the Wellesley Public Schools, and to address what we believe is at the heart of the matter: “What does success look like for our students and for our schools?” WPS’s long-held core values of **Academic Excellence**, **Commitment to Community**, **Respect for Human Differences**, and **Cooperative and Caring Relationships** are foundational to the district’s mission of providing *“a high quality, comprehensive educational experience that supports each student’s academic, social, and emotional development and prepares them to be global citizens who are college, career, and life ready.”* Our dedicated administrators and educators strive to deliver on this broad-based mission and to **focus on every child, in every classroom, every day**, even in the face of unprecedented challenges brought about by the pandemic.

What does a focus on every child, in every classroom, every day look like? This mantra is the lifeblood of our school district and it will look different to each individual student. For some, they will see it in their small book group in an elementary English class. For others, it is the opportunity to take the right level course in high school where courses are offered from college prep, to advanced college prep, to honors and AP. For some students, it will be additional support in those moments that they are struggling to understand a concept. For many students, it will be the ability to discover or pursue a passion through the many elective courses at the secondary level ranging from arts (both performing and visual) to business and engineering courses and everything in between. For some, it will be participation in an in-district specialized program addressing special education needs. For a majority of students at the high school, it will include participation in a team sport and/or performing arts. And for every student, it looks like providing social and emotional education and support as they grow and mature into citizens of the world.

We strive to challenge our students every day with rigorous coursework and we do even more to educate the whole child by providing each student with opportunities to experience joy, teamwork, support and personal growth throughout the preK-Grade 12 experience. Educating each individual child is a profound responsibility. With that goal in mind and recognizing the breadth of students in the district, the Committee does not support allocating district efforts and resources solely for the purpose of achieving higher rankings by an external party such as the *U.S. News and World Report* or any other media outlet. Instead, the Committee supports the allocation of resources to address not only academic needs, but also pandemic recovery and the other key priorities identified in the annual budgets, as evidenced by our recently approved FY’23 Budget request.

In parallel, several years ago, the District started a highly collaborative, community-driven process to more formally define what success looks like given the dynamic nature of the world for which we are preparing students. The results were captured in the vision for the **Profile of a Graduate**, which states: *WPS aspires to be a school system that develops the heads, hearts, and hands of its students by inspiring them to:*

- *Think Critically & Solve Problems*
- *Create & Innovate*
- *Engage Locally & Globally*
- *Communicate & Collaborate*
- *Respect Human Differences & Challenge Inequities*
- *Attend to their Physical, Social & Emotional Health*

Achieving this vision requires making necessary refinements, often transformative ones, to how education gets delivered. The strategic priorities and initiatives will be detailed in the updated District Strategic Plan, which was delayed by two years due to the pandemic, but which we anticipate will be shared in a new draft form with the community for feedback by the end of this school year. And, as is the case every year, annual district goals and School Improvement Plans are developed that align with the overall strategic plan and vision, and the progress against achieving those goals get reported on at School Committee meetings throughout the school year. In addition, the plan is to reinstate the annual District Progress Report moving forward.

We do not do this work alone and invite WPS families and members of the community to continue to engage with the Committee through a number of avenues including:

- Public Comment at School Committee meetings – meeting agendas are posted in advance on [the town's agenda center](#) and, following a meeting, a [School Committee newsletter](#) provides a summary of actions taken at Committee meetings
- Monthly office hours
- Informal dialogue and Q&A sessions with Committee members at “Conversations with School Committee” meetings held at each school (a forum introduced earlier this year)
- Emails to [school\\_committee@wellesleyps.org](mailto:school_committee@wellesleyps.org) which reach all five Committee members and/or phone calls to individual School Committee members
- Community forums on specific topics of interest, for example, feedback sessions on the draft strategic plan

Recognizing the ever-evolving context of the communications landscape, the Committee is recommitting to robust community dialogue and invites recommendations regarding new opportunities and possibilities for improving communications.

We acknowledge the profound responsibility we hold for overseeing the education of the children in the Wellesley Public Schools, and remain committed to our core values and mission and to partnering with WPS leadership and the community on achieving our shared vision.