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## Committee of the Whole

August 2, 2022

Board Room

7:00 p.m.

The school board's Committee of the Whole meeting on Tuesday, August 2, 2022 was held in the district office board room. An overflow area was made available in the lobby as attendance warranted.

Committee of the Whole meetings are not voting sessions. These meetings are held for the board to hear presentations, review policies, evaluate data, and hold discussions. Individuals interested in providing public comments must provide their name, their address, and their topic of comment to the Board Secretary at [boardsecretary@warwicksd.org](mailto:boardsecretary@warwicksd.org) before 4:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting. The board may or may not elect to respond to comments.

This meeting was held in person as well as virtually using this link:

<https://youtu.be/3f2yiKp8xmE>

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**Members Present: Nelson Peters, Lisa Miller, Emily Zimmerman, Melanie Calender, Scott Landis, April Hershey, Todd Rucci, Leslie Penkunas, C. Edward Browne, Matt Knouse, Nate Wertsch, James Koelsch**

Guests (in-person): Wendy Andrews, Johnny Kellogg, Julianna Bogda, Lindsey Stock, Jenna Louderback, Noelle Brossman, Justin Welker, Hannah Barbush, Kylie Funk, Rachel Wilson Snyder, Diane Funk, Doug Kellogg, Mary Turner, T. Mitchell, Fae Skuya, Lynn Brubaker, Tannia Carpenter, Katrina Weaver, Megan Welsh, Sue Garner, Veronica Myer, Nate Myer, Kerri Hample, Cindy Wingenroth, Jennifer Knecht, Chrissy Ovalle, Jaden Ovalle, Paula Shumaker, Sue Rigg, Greta Soner, Mark Mueller, Christina Bracken, R. Weaver, Violet Weitzel, Kimberly Regennas, Rachael Haverstick, Arielle Miller, Jestin Welker, Kayla Cook, Christina Smoker, Amy Martin, Larry Martin, Bethany Tomassetti, Mark Tomassetti

Virtual guests: 26

1. GAPP Exchange Presentation  
~ Mrs. Wendy Andrews and WHS Students

Mrs. Andrews shared information about the GAPP exchange program that she and students had just attended. She thanked the board and WSD for giving them the opportunity to experience “another world”. A ppt presentation highlighted the trip with pictures and explanations of what they did. Students were paired with German students, they toured various towns, they participated in several activities and learned about multiple historic locations and events. This trip included five days in Berlin with their German student partners. They wrapped up their trip

Next meeting: *September 6, 2022*

with a congressional session. Students learned to navigate transportation, practiced patience, attended school, tried new foods, and presented (in German) information about their school experiences in America. The partnership with the German school is strong and benefits both groups of students. Mrs. Andrews was impressed with the character of the students she traveled with. The German students will visit us in the Spring.

Johnny Kellogg shared his experience and the connection he made with Franko, the German student he was paired with. Johnny shared a personal story of traveling on transportation, going the wrong way at first, then figuring out the correct train, and enjoying the entire experience. He shared that his German has improved due to this trip. He summarized the trip as “awesome”.

Juliana Bogda shared her “amazing” experience with the student and family she was paired with. She considers them her family now. She felt it was not just a trip, it was an immersion in the culture. She would like to go to college in a foreign country and is thankful she was able to participate in this experience.

When asked what impacted them the most Juliana said the connections and she plans to stay in contact with the family that hosted her. Johnny talked about the culture and how it was so different yet so similar to his, he plans to continue with German and could see himself going back, possibly as an engineer.

## 2. PAYS Survey Data

*~ Dr. Lindsey Stock, Director of Elementary Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment*

Dr. Stock shared a ppt presentation related to Pennsylvania Youth Survey (PAYS) results. She reviewed who it is given to, when it is given, and that the results are compared to the state data as well as now at a national level. The presentation identified the domains covered.

Warwick’s information was shared and represented data from 2017, 2019 and 2021. Information included general demographics and areas that stood out in each of the domains. Vaping was the first area of data shared, what she found alarming was that data shows that students are not aware of what they are vaping. Other areas discussed were data on binge drinking, driving after alcohol or marijuana use; some of these areas have seen a decrease over the years. Numbers are showing an increase in the areas of parents and friends' parents providing alcohol to students. While the overall numbers are not huge, it is something to pay attention to.

When asked about the margin of error and truthfulness of how students are responding, Dr. Stock clarified there is a margin of error and talked about good test creation. She does have access to all of the questions and there are some that could be interpreted differently by individual students.

Dr. Stock reviewed the data on antisocial behavior and consequences delivered by the schools. The validity of the data was questioned and it was asked if the

*Next meeting: September 6, 2022*

data from the survey has been compared to the data that we do have related to school discipline and consequences. Dr. Stock explained how this could be collected, compared, and looked at to develop our programs related to behaviors.

The domain of commitment and involvement is an area for the district to take note of. The data suggests that we need to continue to be aware of how school, college, and jobs are changing and how what we do in school impacts a student's future. Dr. Stock suggested a focus area on long term goals and helping students see the importance of their current schooling connected to their future. A take away was to pay attention to how we keep students motivated and engaged.

There was a discussion about the impact of COVID and the timing of the survey. It was noted that there are multiple factors that could impact the survey results.

General data shows that students do feel safe.

Violence and drugs on school property is a domain that was noted. While the numbers in the different categories are low, there are areas to make note of and compare to other school data.

When looking at bullying and internet safety it was noted that the survey did not clarify if this occurred at school or outside of school. The data shows higher numbers in 6th grade related to this bullying. When looking at the frequency of those identifying being bullied, the higher numbers were incidents in the past year. Numbers are much lower when looking at higher frequency. Discussion included the possible difference between school levels (elementary, middle school, and high school) when interpreting bullying data.

Social and emotional health is a domain that includes mental health. Data was shared about self-harm, feeling depressed, and self perception. When looking at the state numbers, Warwick is below, however it is important to note these areas and keep this on our minds when programming. Suicide risk data is included in this domain and was shared. Transitions and mobility data showed higher numbers than anticipated, yet some of the data has remained consistent over the years of data being shared. There was a discussion on some of the possible reasons for students moving/not having a consistent home. Data was shared on sleeping and eating habits that could impact students.

Perception of risk is another domain that breaks data into perceived risks, identifying smoking, drugs, alcohol as factors. Students' perceptions of what they feel their parents believe was reflected in the survey.

The process of students taking the survey was questioned and the process was explained. Parents are made aware of the survey and parents are able to opt their students out of this survey. It is important that since PAYS does not reflect all students, it is one point of data to consider. This data combined with other data and reviewing programming could impact policies, procedures, and curriculum to better support students.

*Next meeting: September 6, 2022*

The slide show will be emailed to the board members and posted on the district website.

Other organizations do use this data to provide grant opportunities. Increased awareness helps the district serve students. The district can continue to grow in this area. A challenge is a lack of services outside of the school system, we need to continue to look at ways to build partnerships and leverage resources to support students.

### 3. Materials & Resources - Opt In vs. Opt Out

Mr. Koelsch shared how he has learned to look at and approach situations with different perspectives. As leaders, situations need to be looked at from different perspectives and leaders need to try to understand others' views. Using the lens of compassion, kindness, and care when approaching topics is helpful.

Mr. Koelsch shared leadership experiences that he has valued and talked about what he has learned from others. He thanked a community member for sharing the difference between gender and sexually explicit content. He noted it is important to consider the age of kids when looking at materials. He wants to open the discussion of opt in and opt out with the board to gain others perspectives.

Mrs. Pekunas shared her thoughts on the processes that have been put in place, followed, and then topics/concerns continue to come up. She feels that an opt-in process would be flawed and gave examples of the impact. Impact included the time and resources needed to put this in place. She noted that curriculum can be viewed, opt out has been in place, and materials have been vetted. She supports what is in place and opt out.

Mrs. Zimmerman referred to the PA standards. She shared the expectations related to sexual content, noting various grade levels. She feels the content in the curriculum is different from the materials found in the library. She feels there is a concern with broken trust related to these topics which leads to the need to heal as a community. For her, it is a factor of common sense to not oversexualize content. She shared concerns about the library committee and how books were selected. She does not feel that the library committee represents the community and questions the criteria set to approve books. She supports opt in.

Mr. Landis feels there can be a distinction between classroom curriculum and library materials. He feels open discussion is needed to reflect the changing topics and members of the board; these conversations need to continue. These issues do impact our students, and it needs to be discussed. He questioned a process to ensure that we have materials representing different perspectives.

Mr. Koelsch recognized that he does not want to put more work on the teachers by implementing an opt-in process. The teachers do work hard. He does want to be more aware of the materials used and parents to have the choice in what their students are exposed to.

*Next meeting: September 6, 2022*

Mr. Knouse feels the library committee is a concern, it does not represent the community. He feels parents and teachers may have different perspectives on what is best for the kids and now this needs to be worked through. He shared examples of teaching content such as a topic on race and acceptance yet using books that use racial slurs sends conflicting messages. He would like to have age-appropriate materials in the library, wants the library committee to be looked at and changed, and welcomes debate in a classroom without some of the materials currently in place.

Mrs. Miller questioned how a book is shared with families so that they are aware of what is going to be used. She feels it may be important to have teachers make parents aware of materials used.

Mr. Rucci thanked the members for their discussion and pointed out the beauty in working towards what is best for the students. He has a hard time to define what is appropriate beyond his home. The board wants to represent the community. He talked about the processes and procedures in place and questioned if this is the place to start, to improve the processes and procedures to speak into the curriculum. He acknowledged that moving towards healing is needed.

Dr. Hershey offered suggestions beginning with curriculum and how that is approved. Curriculum is now made available to the community to review. The library committee could include an interview process and the board could sit in on interviews and select the committee. Teachers and staff need to be on that committee.

Mr. Nelson felt there was a healthy discussion by all. He pointed out that the original topic was opt in and opt out. He connected this situation to a current legal process, which was an opt out process. He talked about PTO's at the elementary level and questioned what is at the secondary level.

Mr. Browne thanked everyone for their comments. He would like materials to be age appropriate and not include anything pornographic. He wants to trust public education to do the best for the students. He feels opt out would promote more parent involvement and engagement in reviewing what is available and gives parents more choice. He connected the PAYs survey, those students not with their families, and how the opt in vs out impacts them. He agrees the opt out policy should be improved and more information should be shared with the community. He wants to empower teachers to make the best educational decisions they can.

Mr. Koelsch thanked everyone for sharing. He feels they will strengthen from this.

Mr. Rucci summarized that there is direction. He clarified that all care deeply about every student. He appreciates the dialogue and debate, this will make WSD stronger.

*Next meeting: September 6, 2022*

Mr. Knouse questioned the age appropriateness concern he had shared earlier.

Dr. Hershey clarified the library committee would focus on this.

4. Other Relevant Items

None

Public Comments - Committee of Whole:

Christina Bracken - Questionable Content in Books/Curriculum

She shared from a parent and teacher perspective. She summarized the curriculum process, she invites students to look at the books they will use in class, and has students write initial thoughts before she begins teaching the book. She sends a list of books home to parents and it is posted on her teacher webpage. She shared how students learn about their relationships through others' relationships in novels. She wants students to have discussions, and to learn from them (materials and each other).

Rachel Wilson-Snyder - Item #3 - Materials & Resources

She shared scripture related to spiritual war, she quoted various historical and political people who also referred to God for guidance.

Elizabeth Radecic - Opting In vs Opting Out

She shared a childhood movie and how it impacted her. Her mom answered her questions about a same sex couple kissing in a non judgemental way, a life lesson she continues to believe in (love is love). She feels it is not harmful for kids to know families look different. She feels limiting books is not right and she will continue to speak to this.

Mary Turner - Opt-in Policy

She shared her students path through school, her child spends more waking hours with her teachers than she does with her. She appreciates and trusts the teachers that have been part of her daughter's education and life. She feels the adults in her life have been supportive, caring, and have had difficult conversations with her daughter. She mentioned that high school students do not share everything with their parents, therefore as a community we should allow students to have other trusted adults in their life and the teachers have done this for her daughter. She is not in support of opt in and feels it would be difficult to implement.

Reggie Weaver - Opt In vs. Opt Out Policy

He focused on "consent". He connected consent to the materials in school, broken trust, feels schools should not promote the sexual nature of some materials. Schools should err on the side of extreme caution when it comes to materials with sexual content. Consent should be sought.

Arielle Miller - Continued Challenging of Curriculum and the Opt In vs Opt Out Policy

She shared that we have a community seeking unity. She talked about the care and thought that goes into the curriculum being huge. She stressed that we have to be okay with being uncomfortable, if topics are shared in a meaningful way she is okay with this.

*Next meeting: September 6, 2022*

She seeks a curriculum that covers a wide range and feels an opt in policy would prevent this.

#### Amy Martin - Opt In Policy

She shared her experience with opting her student out of a book. She had a concern that she felt students were responsible for opting out and feels this should be looked at. She suggested that curriculum materials be made available in the evening so that those that work could come preview them. She asks that the materials be more accessible and the process explained for opting out. She is willing to be considered for the library committee. She shared concerns with a novel that was explicit.

#### Chrissy Ovalle - Opt In/Opt Out

She is excited by the conversations that occurred tonight. She too feels that curriculum and library materials are separate. She shared information about an article that said students exposed to sexual content is connected to future concerns related to sexual encounters.

#### Christina Smoker - Opt In Policy

She feels it is a mistake to re-evaluate the library committee. She feels we are second guessing those with credentials and using politics to drive changes which should not be a factor. She pointed out that this is a public school, with different ideology, the opt in process would shut these down. She feels when one registers in public schools, one has opted in.

#### Bethany Tomassetti - Opt In

She was encouraged with the discussions tonight. She feels opting in protects students from sexual, drug, and other negative content. Opting in would help build trust. She feels the library is an extension to the curriculum, they should be unified. She feels there is light at the end of the tunnel based on the conversations this evening.

#### Kimberly Regennas - Proposed Opt In for Material & Other Topics

She shared that the library committee did talk about the balancing of materials, during the library committee this was discussed. She asks that one not be reduced to their political affiliation, she listed all that she is beyond this. She cautions the trust issues that would come along with building a committee based on political affiliation.

#### Rachael Haverstick - Access, Opportunity and Belonging

She shared concerns with looking at a new library committee after saying we trust teachers and staff, yet we are now saying that committee should be changed. She shared an article about making decisions based on who is not in the room, there are students not represented when the board meets. Our work should lead us to access and belonging for all.

#### Veronica Myer - Opt-in Item

She shared an excerpt from a book. In summary it talked about the load of knowledge being too heavy for younger people, the adults should hold and protect knowledge until students are older. She recognizes that students should see themselves in material, but questions the sexual content that is accessible. She challenges staff to make parents aware of all materials and to offer opt in.

*Next meeting: September 6, 2022*

Tannia Carpenter - Opt In Issue

She shared the PA standards and how this is carried out in school. She questions if she will get a list of materials and a copy of the curriculum at the middle school level. She hopes so. She feels that our curriculum and materials are at times conflicting. She feels parents deserve full transparency.

The committee adjourned at 10:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Harris

*Next meeting: September 6, 2022*







# Warwick School District

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**Warwick School District**  
**Student Activities Committee**



August 11, 2022

Board Room

6:00PM

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***MINUTES***

**CANCELLED**

**No meeting - August 2022**

*Due to the lack of agenda items, no meeting was held  
during the month of August.*

*Next Meeting: September 8, 2022*