

Good Evening Council Vice President Logan, members of the Waltham City Council and to the citizens of Waltham who are watching. I appreciate the opportunity to stand before you to discuss a topic that I know is important to you, to the Waltham School Committee and, as evidenced by the number of people here this evening, is important to our community.

The last time I was in these chambers to formally discuss the high school building project was at a special City Council meeting called by Mayor McCarthy on December 12, 2016—just shy of one year ago today. In some ways, a lot has been accomplished with our project (and in a few slides I'll speak quickly about where we stand and what we have accomplished). The facts will illustrate that there is much for which we should be collectively proud.

We must also be honest with our community that, in so many other ways, our current progress is unacceptable. Like all of you, I pride myself on hitting benchmarks, accomplishing goals, increasing student outcomes, developing high quality products, and pushing schools toward becoming more excellent and more equitable organizations. Therefore, it is difficult for me to admit that: we need to take collective responsibility that where we stand today is

unacceptable to our children, to our families and to our community. We might disagree on a preferred site for a new Waltham High School, but I hope everyone in this room joins me in two feelings: a sense of embarrassment because the current paralysis in which we find ourselves is unacceptable—to our children, to our parents and to our community and a sense of hope for what we can collectively accomplish when we put our efforts toward a common and unified goal.

As the leader of the Waltham Public Schools, I'm not here tonight to point fingers. I'm here to ask one thing: let's bury the reasons that got us to this point. As a collective team, let's move forward and recommit to open and transparent communication. Let's commit to roll up our sleeves and to doing the hard work of building a high school that is better than just "good enough." Let's commit to a flagship school that once and for all puts Waltham on the educational map and reflects the high school that our children, families and community deserve.

During your last Committee of the Whole meeting, Councillor Randy LeBlanc repeatedly asked, "What happens after we invite the Superintendent in to talk about the sites?" I humbly ask that the City Council return to the original resolution proffered by Councillor Fowler. As the leader of the Waltham

Schools I'm explicitly asking you to get into a room with the Waltham School Committee and work in collaboration to finalize a location for a Waltham High School. The current strategy of sending resolutions, motions and old ideas that have already been reviewed back and forth between bodies is not working and it is the source of our paralysis. It's now time to engage in two-way dialogue.

In the end, it is my hope that we can collaborate to find the best path forward. Our community expects us to be the leaders I know we can be and, to work as one team, to find solutions. On a recent phone call with the MSBA they shared their expectation that Waltham speak with a single, unified voice. I respectfully come before you this evening in the hope that tonight we pivot toward a single voice that will serve our community now and for generations to come.

As I transition into my presentation, I want to make one final point. The SBC and especially the SC has approached this project with a strategic view of what needs to be accomplished. There is no question they, too, understand that building a flagship school that delivers the education plan is our top priority. I share their concern that we cannot understate the importance of finding additional K-8 capacity in the city as soon as possible. Like

communities in the area, our elementary schools and now one of our middle schools—with the second not far behind-- are busting at the seams. At the conclusion of this project we will also need space for our Dual Language School, the Central Office staff and the Parent Information Center. These are complex issues that require partnership and dialogue. It is my hope we can find a path toward constructive dialogue that solves these complex problems.