

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
May 22, 2017

I. A. Call To Order

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 7:03 PM at Case House by Mrs. Danielle Black, Chair. In attendance were Mr. Alex Cobb of the School Committee; Dr. Midge Connolly, Superintendent; Mrs. Pamela Bator, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction; and Mrs. Cynthia Mahr, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations. Not present: Dr. Ed Heller, Mr. John Henry, Dr. Sanjay Saini. Dr. Saini joined the meeting at 7:15 PM; Mr. Henry joined the meeting at 7:40 PM. Mrs. Elizabeth Nagarajah, METCO Representative to the School Committee, joined the meeting at 7:30 PM.

Also in attendance were Ms. Jennifer Truslow, Director of Student Services; Mr. Anthony Parker, Weston High School Principal; Ms. Kate Lemons, Grade 6-12 English Department Head; Ms. Katharine Odell, Elementary Literacy Curriculum Specialist; Mr. Andrew Rizza, Athletic Trainer; and Ms. Patricia Wright, Nurse Leader, as well as nurses Kathy Becker and Pat Hoban.

Mrs. Black welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced members of the School Committee and Administration, and reviewed the evening's agenda. She noted that Mr. Henry would be arriving late due to travel delays and, therefore, would postpone the School Committee Reorganizations until later in the meeting. She also noted Mrs. Cheryl Antoine, Alternating METCO Representative, was attending a Leadership Conference in San Antonio.

I.B. School Committee Reorganization (postponed to later in meeting)

I.C. Chairman's Report – None presented.

I.D. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Connolly highlighted recent events and student achievements in the district. At the high school, she reported that more than 300 students sat for over 550 exams during two weeks in May; June Academy, which starts on June 7, will culminate in a showcase on June 21; senior Sophia Palocz was named a 2017 National Merit Scholar, selected from more than 15,000 finalists, and will receive a scholarship from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. She reported that Junior Garrett Lualdi attended the New England Young Writers' Conference at Bread Loaf School of English at Middlebury College, Stephan Etienne will attend the Champlain College Young Writers' Conference in Burlington, VT, and Junior Kylisha Buchanan was accepted into the National Parks Service's highly competitive paid internship program and was assigned to the Boston Harbor Islands to lead educational programs for youth.

Dr. Connolly reported that Mr. Corey Guerra and Weston DECA students attended the annual DECA International Career Development Conference in Anaheim in late April, the 4th time Weston qualified in its six years in DECA. At the conference, Tyler Morris and Dhruv Sumath attended a two-day leadership academy, Arsh Tajuddin competed in the Virtual Business Restaurant category, and Adra Cataltepe competed in the Financial Consulting event.

Dr. Connolly congratulated senior Kenz Kallal and freshman Andrew Yao on each making the top 10 in the state on the Massachusetts Mathematics Olympiad. She noted that Weston had five students in the top 100 out of the thousands of public and private school students who competed in the level one contest.

Dr. Connolly reported that Country School's all-school field trip to the Discovery Museum was a tremendous success. Dr. Susan Erickson, K-5 Science & Social Studies Curriculum Specialist, and museum staff developed activities and challenges focused on design engineering and the natural world. The museum was very impressed with the students' creativity, deep thinking, cooperation with their peers and appropriate behavior. Country School students then participated in an All-School STEM Challenge, developed by Dr. Erickson, Mrs. Kate Benson, Technology Integration Specialist, and Ms. Colleen Lucas, Country School Art Teacher, where they needed to design and engineer a bird's nest that would protect an egg from cracking if the nest fell out of a tree in high winds. Each class presented their design at an all school meeting.

Dr. Connolly said the K-12 District Art Show would be up until May 30 and encouraged all to view it. She noted that 10% of the high school student population participated in the Theater Company's production of *Les Miserables*, which she attended and indicated was, "quite a performance."

Dr. Connolly highlighted some recent faculty/staff achievements, noting that Drama Director John Minigan continues his success as a playwright with several of his plays being read or produced around New England in the next several months. She reported on History Department faculty good news, noting that Sean Smith has been selected as a Ford's Theater Teacher Fellow and will spend a week exploring Civil War history in Washington, DC through this fully funded program; Kerry Dunne has been awarded a full scholarship to spend a week at the Colonial Williamsburg Teacher Institute, exploring place-based education approaches while living in a colonial home; Katie Tucker will be attending a full week training for new AP Psychology teachers at Wake Forest University in North Carolina; Kim Young is travelling to the Arctic Circle via Norway through National Geographic's Grosvenor Teacher Fellow program, and also will be participating in the Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminar in Bulgaria; and Robin Wanosky is headed into the intensive summer learning portion of EDCO's Educational Leadership Institute as she pursues administrative licensure.

Dr. Connolly reported on community events, noting that Spring Fling was Saturday, April 29 on the Town Green, with funds raised for Camp No Limits and Country School held a successful Multi-Cultural Night community event on April 28th. She mentioned the recent Bridge Program graduate celebration and the upcoming METCO graduate celebration.

I.E. Subcommittee Reports –

Proctor Field Project – Mr. Cobb, noting that the Proctor Project and Field 1 passed at Town Meeting, expressed appreciation for the community's support and said he is looking forward to moving ahead on the projects. He reported that the concession building is out to bid, and a pre-construction meeting with the low bidder will be scheduled. He said they are going with all four of the alternates.

Case House – Mrs. Black reported that the architect would be in district to meet with people in the building.

I.F. Open Forum – No comments.

II.A. Weston Education Enrichment Fund Committee

WEEFC Proposals - Mrs. Bator presented proposals and highlighted three Giving Tree grants resulting from the "All Hands In" event. She discussed a proposal from Kim Young for a camera with a 360 degree lens to be used to create a virtual reality experience and used on all international trips and funding request for Grade 9 "Project Zero."

MOTION: Upon motion by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Saini, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve WEEFC grant proposals as presented in memo of May 9, 2017, totaling \$36,351.21.

WEEFC Board – Proposed Expansion

Mrs. Black shared a request from the WEEFC Chair to temporarily increase the WEEFC Board to 11 members to help ease transition while the Board experiences significant transition in the next few years. Mrs. Black noted there is precedent for this practice. She indicated the slate would be presented for approval at the June 5 School Committee meeting.

MOTION: Upon motion by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Saini, the School Committee voted unanimously to support the request to temporarily increase the WEEFC Board to 11 members.

II.B. Student Services Report

Ms. Truslow provided an end of year report on Special Education. She shared the department's overall goals and an update on the number of students with disabilities, noting an increase in

services needed at the Middle School level. She reviewed out of district placements by disability and presented an update on programs. Ms. Truslow noted an addition of a part-time secretary to support the pre-schools and a new ACCESS teacher at Country School. She noted that there will be a learning based classroom at Woodland School at grades 2 and 3 and at Field School at both grades 4 and 5, with Learning Centers at all three elementary schools. She indicated the Middle School program is more robust. She reported that all six seniors in the Bridge Program are graduating and going to four-year colleges. Ms. Truslow noted the Bridge Program next year will be divided into two groups, Bridge/SPED and Transitions.

Mr. Henry joined the meeting.

Mrs. Wright presented an update on the Health Services provided to students, sharing data on student and staff encounters, mandated screenings, and work on the concussion and food allergy policies. She discussed emergency preparedness, noting that all school nurses in Weston and Wayland are members of MRC, are certified in CPR and AED, trained in use of Narcan, and stock Narcan and EpiPens in each building. Mrs. Wright reviewed the Essential Schools Health Services (ESHS) Grant and noted the grant was renewed for FY18 and FY19 for \$49,200 each year. Mrs. Wright expressed appreciation to Kathy Becker, and Pat Hoban, retiring in June after 19 and 18 years, respectively, noting they will be missed. There was a round of applause for both nurses. Mrs. Black noted the tributes presented at the Staff Recognition Program and wished them well in retirement.

Ms. Truslow presented English Language Education (ELE) data, noting there are currently 89 students speaking 17 different primary languages who receive ELE services, She reported there are now Team Chairs at all schools, 18 faculty members were trained this year in Orton-Gillingham, and that further professional development planned includes Project Read, Benchmark Assessment, and 504 and CPI Training. She also noted work on the State Coordinated Program Review.

The Committee discussed the report. In response to Mr. Cobb's question as to where there could be further improvement, Ms. Truslow noted that communication, responsiveness, and building trust continue to be goals. Mrs. Christen Lacey, WestonPAC Chair, noted she would be also providing an update at the next School Committee meeting. She thanked the Committee for their investment, noting great strides have been made with much improvement.

MOTION: Upon motion by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry, the School Committee voted unanimously to receive the Student Services Report.

II.C. Department Response to ELA Program Review Report

Mrs. Bator, Ms. Lemons and Ms. Odell presented the English Department's response to the report of the external program review and plans for implementing the recommendations. Mrs. Bator noted that not all recommendations will be implemented. They reported there will be two significant changes at the elementary level to be implemented in the fall. These include *Foundations*, a research-based phonics program for Kindergarten and Grade 1, and *Reading & Writing Project*, a comprehensive writing program from Teachers College, Columbia University, referred to as *Lucy Calkins*. Elementary teachers will participate in a one-day introductory workshop from Teachers College this summer and a week-long workshop in 2018 to adopt a vertically aligned writing program. Regarding recommendations for drama, there will be summer workshops this year for drama teachers to brainstorm, explore what other districts do, and discuss what options there may be for elementary students. To address the recommendation for instructional coaches in each building, Ms. Odell indicated this will likely be discussed during Leadership Review. Mrs. Bator reviewed the recommendation to better communicate about ELA. She said objectives are to foster communication about experiences, both annually and throughout the PreK-Grade 12 continuum, to provide opportunity for dialogue between the ELA/Drama Program and the community, and to expand the use of authentic audiences for student work. She noted there are many years of work ahead on this.

The Committee discussed. Mr. Cobb noted he would like more publicity about the program reviews on the website. Mrs. Christy O'Brien, parent, expressed concern that teachers would have increased workload. A Grade 9 student asked questions for the student newspaper regarding

consistency in student admission to Honors classes. Ms. Lemons suggested he email her questions and she would provide answers. Mrs. Lacey mentioned the early screening instituted by Ms. Odell to identify and address literacy challenges early. The Committee thanked Mrs. Bator, Ms. Lemons, and Ms. Odell.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry, the School Committee voted unanimously to receive the English Department Response to the ELA/Drama Program Review Report.

II.D. High School June Academy Update

The School Committee held a discussion to better understand and define the role of June Academy in satisfying the state requirement of 180-day school year, graduation requirements, and credits. Mr. Parker said attendance at and participation in June Academy is part of the 180-day school year and will be a graduation requirement. He noted that students would receive a blank diploma if they do not attend. He discussed mandatory attendance requirements of the program and noted any waivers would be at the principal's discretion only. Dr. Connolly noted that June Academy is an exciting opportunity for the students. The Committee discussed the expectations of June Academy. Mr. Parker said he would send a letter out advising students and parents of the requirements.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Dr. Saini, the School Committee voted unanimously to adopt the proposed graduation requirement of June Academy, noting it is an expectation of the District, School Committee and Administration, that all students need to complete June Academy requirements each year in Grades 9, 10, and 11, in order to move on to the next school year.

II.E. PTO Annual Report

Alix Campbell and Attia Linnard reported on activities of the PTO this past year. Ms. Campbell presented a revised PTO Mission Statement. She noted that membership and income declined this year indicated that funding of enrichment is now done by WEEFC, not PTO. Ms. Campbell reviewed communication by the PTO and noted they would publish a printed calendar/directory again next year. She reviewed the Parent Education programs and indicated they plan only two events in the coming year and noted that, due to declining budgets, the PTO would no longer fund faculty appreciation events but would request parent donations for the events. Ms. Campbell expressed appreciation to the School Committee, administration, and staff for support this year.

II.F. Discussion of Weston Soccer Club's interest in hosting a Memorial Day Weekend tournament on school fields

Mrs. Black noted the request to use the fields had been withdrawn so no action was necessary. The Committee briefly discussed its policy on use of fields, noting that permission is required by application well in advance of the event, and that use is generally limited to non-profit organizations with use primarily for Weston residents. Mr. Cobb suggested that the new website include a tab with field uses. No action taken.

II.G. Policy Review

Mr. Henry presented an update to the Food Allergy Policy and guidelines. He said there will be an individualized health plan for each student developed by parents, school nurse, and physician, with assurances regarding communication of the plan. Mr. Henry presented proposed revisions to the existing protocol for athletic concussions. Mrs. Black noted there should be clear guidelines about re-entry. Mr. Henry indicated he would revisit the protocol and bring forward at next meeting. No action taken. Mrs. Black requested that proposed policies be posted on website when ready for public review.

II.H. Facility Projects Update (Proctor Field, Case House) (discussed under subcommittee reports)

I.B. School Committee Reorganization

Mrs. Black indicated that, as this meeting was the first one following Town Meeting, School Committee elections and discussion of assignments would be in order.

MOTION: Upon motion by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry, the School Committee voted unanimously to re-elect Mrs. Black as Chair.

MOTION: Upon motion by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to elect Mr. Henry as Vice Chair.

III.A. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve minutes of April 24, 2017.

III.B. Business Actions

Certificate of Warrant

Mrs. Mahr presented a Certificate of the Secretary, approval of warrants for payment.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mr. Cobb, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrant for payment of \$3,368,150.29 by the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

IV. Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Saini, at 10:00 PM, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn.