

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
September 25, 2017

I. A. Call To Order

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 7:05 PM at Case House by Mrs. Danielle Black, Chair. In attendance were Mr. Alex Cobb, Dr. Ed Heller, Mr. John Henry, and Dr. Sanjay Saini of the School Committee; Mrs. Cheryl Antoine, METCO Representative to the School Committee; Dr. Midge Connolly, Superintendent; Mrs. Pamela Bator, Assistant Superintendent of District Advancement; Dr. Abbie Lareau, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning; and Mrs. Cynthia Mahr, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

Also in attendance were Mrs. Elizabeth Nagarajah, Alternate METCO Representative to the School Committee, and Dr. Lee McCanne, Director of Technology and School Libraries.

Mrs. Black welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced members of the School Committee and Administration, and reviewed the evening's agenda. She noted a student representative had not been elected yet.

I.B. Chairman's Report – Mrs. Black reported that she would attend the Historical Commission meeting on Wednesday night regarding Case House renovation project and the PBC meeting on Thursday for both Proctor Field and Case House projects.

I.C. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Connolly introduced Dr. Jim Marini, her coach and mentor this year. She reviewed Dr. Marini's credentials, noting he was Superintendent of Schools in Winchester, Interim Superintendent in Newton and North Andover districts, and Principal of Newton North High School and Concord Middle School. He said he has mentored many principals and central office administrators while serving as a coach in the New Superintendent Induction Program. Dr. Connolly welcomed Dr. Marini, noting she is extremely fortunate to have him as her mentor.

Dr. Connolly reported that two home Friday Night football games were held at Rivers School. She expressed appreciation to Rivers for sharing their facilities and Boosters who provided funds for lighting. Dr. Connolly said the games were great community events with positive results in both games for Weston and wonderful opportunity for student athletes.

Dr. Connolly informed the Committee that the Administrative Induction Program, created by Mrs. Bator and Mrs. Mahr, had begun. She indicated that the program was originally created for administrators new to the district but is open to all administrators to come together to have a shared understanding of everything from policy, to finance, to evaluation. She expressed appreciation to Mrs. Bator and Mrs. Mahr for their work on the program. Dr. Connolly reported that a request went out for parent, staff and community volunteers to serve on two 2017 district committees, a Strategic Visioning and Planning Committee and a Homework Working Group. She noted the two committees would be formed later this week.

Dr. Connolly discussed the process implemented for Kindergarten placement. She indicated that the early spring screening allows teachers to have direct contact time with incoming kindergarten students, helping to create balanced classrooms across both schools. She reviewed the placement factors, noting that placement of a child is first made if a particular special education need exists, then if a child has a sibling at a school, then a balance of boys and girls, and then when birthdays fall. After all of those factors, the "familiar face" factor may be considered. She noted there are many students new to Weston that have not attended a preschool here.

Dr. Connolly noted that back to school nights will be held this week at Country, Woodland, Field, and the Middle School. She said the administration will review closely the dates for next year so that parents are not impacted by so many back to school nights in one week.

Dr. Connolly reported that she has begun scheduled walks through of the schools with principals and classroom visits. She indicated the purpose of these walkthroughs, which will occur throughout the year, is to understand better the culture of each school and to talk with the

instructional leaders about teaching and learning. Dr. Connolly mentioned the upcoming Superintendent Coffee for parents this week at Country School's new Innovation Space with Dr. McCanne to discuss the new website and any other technology areas.

I.D. Subcommittee Reports – Mrs. Black reported on the School Committee's first meeting with the High School Student Advisory Council (SAC), noting that much discussion took place regarding the no beverage policy, especially for coffee or water with lids. Dr. Connolly noted dialogue would take place with the administration and nursing staff prior to the October SAC meeting. Mrs. Black reported that PTO held its first board meeting and WestonPAC's first meeting with a speaker was well attended and informative.

I.E. Open Forum – No comments.

II.A. Discussion of Weston Education Enrichment Fund Committee Proposals
Dr. Lareau presented WEEFC proposals for Committee approval, noting the proposals included the continuation of Creative Arts author series, with a new author this year, funds for professional development, and principal discretionary funds.

MOTION: Upon motion by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve WEEFC grant proposals as presented in memo of September 12, 2017, totaling \$46,365.

Appointment to WEEFC Board to fill vacancy

Mrs. Black noted that WEEFC has a vacancy due to the passing of Margie Ross, a sitting board member, and pursuant to Section 2.6 of WEEFC's Rules and Regulations, the School Committee is permitted to fill the vacancy in consultation with WEEFC. She indicated that WEEFC has recommended the appointment of Emily Golin. Mrs. Black reviewed Ms. Golin's credentials, noting that she is skilled in marketing and that WEEFC is in need of a member with such skills.

MOTION: Upon motion by Mr. Henry and seconded by Dr. Heller, the School Committee voted unanimously to appoint Emily Golin to serve on the WEEFC Board for the remainder of Margie Ross's term.

II.B. Initial Discussion of 2018-19 School Calendar

Mrs. Mahr presented initial draft of next year's proposed school calendar. She noted the draft had not been circulated to the Administrative Council or staff. Mrs. Mahr highlighted dates in the proposed calendar, noting that the calendar includes no school on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (Days of Low Attendance), professional development days on the Monday following Thanksgiving and the Tuesday after Martin Luther King Day, and no school on Monday, November 12 in honor of Veterans Day. She noted the earliest last day of school would be June 18, 2019. The Committee discussed the calendar and state holiday regulations as to whether schools need be closed on November 12. Dr. Connolly mentioned concern regarding the Monday after Thanksgiving, noting that is traditionally the first day of tryouts for winter sports. Mrs. Black requested the calendar be sent out to parents for feedback before the next discussion on October 30. Dr. Saini asked about consideration of a day of service on a day of low attendance. Mrs. Black noted that would mean giving up a day of instruction and would require organization; Mr. Henry noted that many teachers would be out for the days. No action taken.

II.C. Policy Review/Discussion

Mr. Henry requested the Committee approve the Section J policies presented at the last meeting that had undergone no revisions, all presented with the exception of JEB. He reported that in reviewing the policies he compares Weston policies to those recommended by MASC and also reviews wording from other districts.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller the School Committee voted unanimously to approve revised Policies JA Goals of Student Policies, JB Equal Educational Opportunities, JF/JFA/JFAB/JFABB Admission of Students to the Weston Public Schools, JFABD Homeless Students, JFBB School Choice, JH

Student Absences and Excuses, JHCB Religious Absence, JHD Exclusions and Exemptions from School Attendance.

Mr. Henry presented to Policy JEB Entrance Age to include wording that the Superintendent's consideration may include "chronological age and academic, social, and emotional preparedness."

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Saini, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve revised Policy JEB Entrance Age.

Mr. Henry presented revised policies JCA Assignment of Students to Schools and JFBBA Admission of Interdistrict Transfer Students (Enrollment of Boston Students in the METCO Program) for a second "first" reading. He indicated that for JCA, after consultation with principals, he added the concept of balancing characteristics across sections and in JFBBA, he made changes as discussed regarding no METCO student be alone in a section and how to handle withdrawals. Mrs. Nagarajah stressed the importance of all children being in a class with at least one other person "who looks like them." A parent present noted that there was a child in her daughter's class who asked not to be in a class with another Boston student. Mrs. Allard, grade 5 teacher, noted that her current class has just one METCO student as one other Boston student originally assigned there, had been moved out of the program. It was noted that the policy should not be too restrictive. Mr. Henry reviewed other proposed changes to the policy, noting the policy would state that at grades 6-11 a vacancy would be filled only at the discretion of the Superintendent, and that enrollment in another program serves as effective withdrawal from Weston Public Schools. He said this makes it clear METCO students may not try out another program and return. Mr. Henry said these two policies would undergo a second reading on October 16 prior to approval.

Mr. Henry presented Policies JI, JIB, JIC (a new policy), JICCA, JICE, JICF, JICFA, JICFB, JICH, JICHA, JICHB, and JIE for a first reading, noting these will undergo a second reading on October 16. He noted that in JICFB Bullying Prevention, he added in concepts of social media and cyber-bullying and fixed references to the district's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. He noted that Policy JIE Pregnant Students was rewritten based on some better models. Dr. Connolly requested that JICFB include a reference to students with disabilities. Mr. Henry requested the Committee provide any feedback to him and he would bring forward revisions.

II.D. School Start Time Committee Update

Mr. Henry updated the Committee on the work of the School Start Time/Scheduling Innovation Steering Committee noting they are still in the investigative stage, and that the committee's goal is for the best physical and emotional health of our students. He reported that a full presentation on the committee's work is scheduled for October 30 and that parent forums will be announced. He encouraged people to visit the committee's updated page on the website where there are links to resources and other websites. Mr. Cobb noted the importance of getting the message of the committee's work out to younger parents so they understand what is happening. No action taken.

II.E. Facility Projects Update (Proctor Field, Case House, Case Complex) –

Proctor Field/HS Track – Mr. Cobb updated the Committee on the ongoing progress of Proctor Field and the track. He said they are hopeful it will be completed by Thanksgiving.

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 September 11 and September 14, 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 \$2,098,609.61 by the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

IV. Executive Session

MOTION: Upon motion made by Dr. Heller and seconded by Mr. Cobb at 8:22 PM the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn to Executive Session for purposes of discussion of contract issues, with the intent to not return to Open Session, with Mr. Cobb voting aye, Dr. Heller voting aye; Mr. Henry voting aye, Dr. Saini voting aye, and Mrs. Black voting aye.

No action taken during Executive Session.

V. Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion made by Dr. Saini and seconded by Mr. Cobb, at 9:40 PM, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn from Executive Session with Mr. Cobb voting aye, Dr. Heller voting aye; Mr. Henry voting aye, Dr. Saini voting aye; and Mrs. Black voting aye.