

## MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

December 5, 2017

### I. A. Call to Order

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 6:05 PM at Case House by Mrs. Danielle Black, Chair. In attendance were Mr. Alex Cobb, Dr. Ed Heller, and Mr. John Henry of the School Committee; Jack Mullany, Student 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. Not present: Dr. Sanjay Saini.

Also in attendance were Mr. John Gibbons, Weston Middle School Principal; Ms. Marla Schay, Grade 6-12 Guidance Department Head; Dr. Kerry Dunne, Grade 6-12 History Department Head; Ms. Erica Cole, Grade 6-12 Science Department Head; Mr. Nick Pezzote, High School Student Activities Advisor; and Ms. Lisa Reitano of the Finance Committee.

Mrs. Black welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced members of the School Committee and Administration, and reviewed the evening's agenda. She indicated that Dr. Saini might join the meeting later.

### I.B. Chairman's Report – Mrs. Black noted it has been a busy week in the schools.

### I.C. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Connolly highlighted recent events in the district. She reported that students in Eunice Feller's Creative Cooking class prepared and cooked a meal for 50 guests of Bristol Lodge Soup Kitchen, with funds for the groceries provided by the Rotary Club of Weston and Wayland, who also served the meal. She indicated that the students will prep and cook one meal per month for Bristol Lodge during the school year.

Dr. Connolly informed the Committee that Weston music students performed very well at the auditions for Senior Districts, with Weston again one of the top schools in the Eastern District in terms of number of students selected. She reported that Weston, one of the smallest schools in the district, had 26 students accepted with 15 receiving recommendations for All State. Dr. Connolly noted that Director of Music Chris Memoli is pleased that, "even though our philosophy in the music program is one of inclusion and having a seat for everyone in our ensembles, we are able to differentiate effectively and inspire our best students to reach the highest levels of achievement." Dr. Connolly reported that three Weston students were selected to participate in the 2017 NAFME All-National Honors Band, Chorus and Orchestra held at DisneyWorld last week. Students selected and traveled to Orlando with Mr. Memoli were Ariel Silverman (French Horn) and Mack Rodgers (Bass Voice); Kendrick Kirby-Lee (Violin) was ill and unable to make the trip.

Dr. Connolly reported that Weston High School students Stella Alphas, Max Fernandez, Ryan Hayes, Sophia Hoagland, Ben Grant, Ashanti Malcolm-Bates, Elizabeth Oey, Sarah O'Sullivan, VJ Rougeau, and Bharathi Subbiah, with faculty member Claire Schomp, attended the recent IDEAS Student Leadership Conference. The IDEAS student leadership conference engages students from a range of racial and ethnic backgrounds in conversation on issues of race, intolerance, discrimination, and allied behavior, and Ms. Schomp reports the students were terrific.

Dr. Connolly update the Committee on the November 27 District Professional Development Day. She reported that Research for Better Teaching founder Jon Saphier presented two sessions of "Making Student Thinking Visible" to all faculty (secondary in the morning, elementary in the afternoon). In the morning, elementary faculty gathered at their schools for safety and crisis planning at the building level. In the afternoon, Middle School faculty gathered for J term planning, and High School faculty met with Dr. Carroll Blake. Prior to a lunch provided by Food Services, all faculty joined together for a district update by Pam Bator and David Poras. Dr. Connolly expressed appreciation to all who helped plan and organize this successful day. She reported that 13 faculty and administrators from Weston attended the METCO Directors Association Annual Conference on Friday, December 1. She said it was a wonderful event and

professional opportunity to connect with other METCO districts and learn from talented engaging presenters.

I.D. Subcommittee Reports – Mrs. Black said WestonPAC would meet on December 8 and SAC meeting would be on December 14. She noted the PTO would not be meeting in December.

I.E. Open Forum – No comments.

II.A. Discussion of Seat Belts on School Buses

Mrs. Black indicated that the School Committee had received a parent request to consider adding seat belts to school buses. Ms. Jennifer Muldoon spoke to the safety concerns of children riding school buses without seat belts and requested the Committee include in the budget buses with seat belts for the children. She stated that the current padded seats, though effective, do not restrain or contain small children, especially at high speeds. Many parents present spoke in support of seat belts. One parent noted the traumatic brain injury incurred by a Wayland student on a school bus. The parents noted that Weston has an opportunity to address the issue before an injury may occur. Mrs. Black reported that the request had been made last spring by parents who offered to fundraise for the seat belts, but she noted it should be a budget item if the Committee supports the request. She noted the issue is compliance by students regarding the actual use of three-point seat belts on buses. The Committee discussed. Mr. Cobb noted that students riding school buses is the safest way for them to be transported to school and noted that because Weston bus drivers are school employees, they are here a long time and build relationships with students and families. Mrs. Mahr said buses in use cannot be retrofitted safely, that companies will not install belts in our current structured buses. She provided budget information for having seat belts on buses, noting there would be the need for eight additional buses, with an approximate cost of \$709,000 plus cost of drivers and benefits. The Committee indicated it would discuss further and would have as an agenda item early in 2018 prior to the budget vote. Members said they would like additional information on how districts enforce compliance. No action taken.

II.B High School Report: Guidance Report on the Class of 2017, Student Performance & Achievement Report, Advanced Placement Program

Ms. Schay and Mr. Pezzote presented the annual high school student academic performance and participation report based on data from the 2016-2017 school year. Mr. Pezzote reported on extra-curricular activities, noting 77 active clubs this year with students participating in multiple clubs. He highlighted some club achievements, noting the success of the Pumpkin Festival, Spring Fling, Best Buddies, and the Theater Company. He thanked all club advisors for their work with the students.

Ms. Schay shared statistics on the Class of 2017, noting that 177 graduates went to 108 different colleges. She reported there were 1800 applications sent and 88% applied early. Ms. Schay indicated that 98.3 % of students in the class went to college, 96% to 4-year, and 54% to selective schools. She reviewed Advanced Placement (AP) test data, indicating that 271 tests were taken, with 87.5% of students scoring 3 or higher. The Committee discussed the report. They discussed removing “selective colleges” as a statistic in future reports and to unbold the selective colleges in the tables. Much discussion occurred regarding the AP exams. Parent Spencer Palocz expressed concern about limiting opportunities and challenges for high achieving students.

MOTION: Upon motion by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller, the School Committee voted unanimously to accept the High School Report.

II.C. 2018-2019 Grade 6-12 Program of Studies

Mr. Gibbons informed the Committee that, for the Middle School, the only changes were changing courses in Technology to match the state recommended standards, with no budget implications. For the high school, Ms. Schay presented proposed changes, noting the only new course proposed was AP Mandarin, to be embedded into Honors Mandarin 5, with no budget

implications. She presented some course changes with no budget impact in the English Department, to replace two semester long courses with one year-long Shakespeare course and to retitle and redesign the Acting courses, as suggested in the ELA Program Review Report. Ms. Schay also presented text revisions for the Program of Studies, including that students can be placed in no more than two override courses and that overrides would not be accepted after the first day of school. Mr. Henry expressed concern regarding consistency in the recommendation procedure. Ms. Schay said they propose adding information to the POS about June Academy, removing two science courses that have not run for many years, revising course number changes in AP Music Theory, renaming the Senior Internship Course, and adding a Seal of Biliteracy. Ms. Baker noted the Seal of Biliteracy could be added to diplomas or transcripts to note proficiency in two languages. Mrs. Black noted the Committee did not receive the materials in a timely enough manner to allow the Committee opportunity to review and properly discuss and indicated the Committee prefers to receive all materials by the Thursday prior to its meetings. She also noted another year delay in addressing the recommendation in the World Language Program Review to reduce one language offered, given the district's size. She said the Committee would like to close out the recommendation by October. Dr. Dunne spoke about the History Department, noting no propose changes for next year. She said the new State Frameworks will be recommended by the end of the year and prefers to wait until that time to propose more changes. Mr. Henry asked about adding a level to History courses to address meeting the needs of all learners. She spoke about the addition of a section of AP World and the added rigor in the CP courses this year as well as the success of AP Psychology. Much discussion occurred regarding having two levels for students rather than three. The Committee discussed, with no action taken. Mrs. Black requested Committee members to send any comments to her or to Dr. Connolly.

II.D. Discussion of Class Size Policy for Middle & High School

The Committee continued its discussion of the Middle and High School class size policy and consideration of increasing the minimum enrollment without requiring School Committee exception/approval from 12 students to 15 students. The Committee postponed a decision until the next meeting when Principal Anthony Parker will be present. No action taken.

II.E. Approval of School Calendar 2018-2019

Dr. Connolly shared feedback she received on the calendar, noting that the professional development day the day after Thanksgiving was problematic for athletics. She indicated an expressed preference to have the professional development days on Fridays and presented a new proposed calendar with professional development days on Friday, January 18, 2019, the Friday prior to MLK weekend, and Friday, March 8, 2019. She requested the Committee vote to approve the proposed calendar at this meeting.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Dr. Heller, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the 2018-2019 school calendar.

II.F. Policy Review/Discussion

Mr. Henry requested the Committee approve the Section J policies presented for review at a prior meeting that had undergone no additional revisions: Policies JL Student Welfare, JLA Student Insurance Program, JLC Student Health Services and Requirements, JLCA Physical Examination of Students, JLCAA Growth and Development Screenings, JLCB Immunization of Students, JLCC Communicable Diseases, JLCD Administering Medicines to Students, JLCDA Possession of Asthma Inhalers and Epi-Pens, and JLI Student Safety. He indicated some slight revisions as recommended by Nurse Leader Patty Wright. He indicated that the Student Activity Fund Policy was on hold for now.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Dr. Heller and seconded by Mr. Henry, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve revised Policies JL, JLA, JLC, JLCA, JLCAA, JLCB, JLCC, JLCD, JLCDA, and JLI.

Mr. Henry presented Policies JM Student Awards and Scholarships, JN Student Volunteers for School and Public Service, JP Student Gifts and Solicitations, JRA Student Records, JRA-R

Student Records Regulations, and JRD Student Photographs for a first reading. He noted these would be presented for approval at a later meeting.

- II.G. Facility Projects Update (Proctor Field, Case House, Case Complex) – Proctor Field/HS Track – Mr. Cobb noted the Thanksgiving football game was held at the new field. Mr. Henry noted it was a phenomenal day, with packed stands. Mr. Cobb expressed appreciation, on behalf of the Town, to Fields Coordinator Ben Polimer and Director of Facilities Gary Jarowski for their work, and to Jim Polando and PBC members for their dedication. Mrs. Black also acknowledged the work of the Town Department Heads, including the Water Department, Board of Health, and Building Inspector. Mr. Cobb noted the project is coming in slightly under the appropriated budget, so they may be able to use funds for a shed by Field 1. Mrs. Black note the Board of Health would like to have a meeting in January to develop and discuss protocol with people who will use the concession. Some discussion of payments to contractor and subcontractors. Mrs. Black noted that Town Manager, Town Counsel and Mr. Jarowski are working on the matter of payments. Mr. Cobb also noted the School Committee may need to revisit its policy on lighting. Some discussion took place regarding lighting for tennis courts and scoreboard for Field 1.
- Case House – Mrs. Black said plans are moving along, noted the PBC would be meeting this week and that Mr. Jarowski was putting a placeholder in the Town Meeting warrant.
- Case Complex – Dr. Heller said work is substantially complete, with planting delayed until the spring. He said the one remaining issue is signage, which is being discussed by Mr. Polimer, Mr. Jarowski, and the Selectmen.

- 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 October 30 and November 13, 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. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrant for payment of \$2,212,949 by the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

Executive Session – Mrs. Black indicated there was no need for an Executive Session.

- IV. Adjournment  
MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Dr. Heller at 9:54 PM the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn.