

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
April 9, 2018

I. A. Call To Order

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 7:03 PM at Boston Police Headquarters, 1 Schroeder Plaza, Roxbury by Mrs. Danielle Black, Chair. In attendance were Mr. Alex Cobb, and Mr. John Henry of the School Committee; Mrs. Cheryl Antoine and Mrs. Elizabeth Nagarajah, METCO Representatives to the School Committee; Dr. Midge Connolly, Superintendent; Mrs. Pamela Bator, Assistant Superintendent for District Advancement; Not present: Dr. Ed Heller; Dr. Sanjay Saini. Dr. Sanjay joined the meeting at 7:25PM.

Also in attendance was Ms. La Toya Rivers, Weston METCO Director; and members of the Weston METCO staff Cyril Kakulu, Theresa Dryden, and Riola Lazo.

Mrs. Black welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced members of the School Committee and Administration, and reviewed the evening's agenda. She noted that Dr. Heller was traveling and unable to attend the meeting.

I.B. Chairman's Report – None.

I.C. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Connolly congratulated the WHS Math Team for their extraordinary performance last week in the medium-sized schools' playoffs for the state championship. Weston finished #1 in all the state math leagues, far ahead of those in second and third place. She reported that the MVM (Most Valuable Mathematician) award went to sophomore Andrew Yao, who scored a perfect 18; close behind was fellow sophomore Ezra Gordon, with 17; Weston's other four final competitors were junior Jeff Liu, sophomore Albert Wu, freshman Ben Chen, and freshman Anthony Cui, all of whom did very well.

Dr. Connolly reported that junior Arda Cataltepe won the state National History Day competition, for his website entitled "The Room Where it Happened," an in-depth analysis of the Compromise of 1790. In addition, Arda was given a special award by the Boston Athenaeum Library for the best use of local special collections. He won the Northeast regionals in March and will compete nationally in Washington D.C., June 10-14. Dr. Connolly noted that History teacher Monny Cochran served as Arda's independent study advisor and supported him in completing his project. Dr. Connolly informed the Committee that juniors Hayley Levin and Michael Martinez, accompanied by faculty member Sean Smith, represented Weston High School at Student Government Day at the Massachusetts State House.

Dr. Connolly highlighted athletic achievements, noting that the Globe All-Scholastics award for Athlete of the Year in Skiing went to Stella Alphas for alpine skiing. Other Weston students named All Scholastics were Jacey Hinton (Swimming), Dale Nickerson (Diving), and Katheryn Milligan, Grazi Vezza, Mika Schowtka, Jacey Hinton, and Courtney Burrow (Swim Relay), along with numerous league all-stars. Dr. Connolly mentioned the wonderful and well attended High School Pops Concerts, Field School Art Day and the upcoming Country and Woodland Art Days.

Dr. Connolly updated the Committee and parents on some of the steps being taken to ensure that the schools are as safe a possible. She indicated that over the next three months Weston will be spending more than \$200,000 to improve different areas of safety. For security reasons she did be share them in a televised public forum, but noted they include new PA systems in the HS, MS Country School and Woodland School, additional swipe card entries and other measures to further insure the safety of our students. In addition, Michele Gay of Safe and Sound Schools has worked with administrators at the elementary schools and HS and MS faculty and students have gone through ALICE training including drills. She noted they are working with Weston Police Chief Goulding and there is an increased police presence to help foster relationships and visibility. Dr. Connolly noted, "Unfortunately, we cannot make our schools completely impenetrable from

somebody that may want to do harm to our children but we continue to keep school safety as a focus and continue to make improvements.”

Dr. Connolly updated the Committee on administrative searches underway, indicating that interviews would be conducted this week for the positions of Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning and Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations. She reported that a request for volunteers to serve on the interview committee for Science Department Head had gone out, the position had been posted, and that an HR Director position would be posted soon.

I.D. Subcommittee Reports – Mrs. Black noted the PTO would meet this week and SAC next week.

I.E. Open Forum – Mrs. Black indicated that this evening’s Open Forum would be at the conclusion of regular business.

II.a. 2017-18 Report on Weston METCO Program

Ms. Rivers reported on the 2017-2018 Weston METCO Program, noting this is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of METCO in Weston with many celebrations throughout the year. She presented student accolades inside and outside of Weston, including two National Honor Society members this year, one POSSE scholarship recipient, a member of the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra, and many more. She reviewed the high percentage of METCO students’ participation in after school sports, clubs, orchestra, school councils and other extracurricular activities. Ms. Rivers shared college acceptances of the METCO seniors. She presented an update on the METCO Department’s goals of the previous year and discussed next steps, including the impact of the reduction of the Community Coordinator position and how it is being addressed, the shortage of drivers and bus monitors, and a review and change to the summer programs/ Ms. Rivers indicated she is enlisting METCO alum for potential collaboration.

Ms. Rivers described the various events held this year to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, noting one last event to be held on April 25, an evening of entertainment and education for the community. She expressed appreciation to Friends of Weston METCO, BWMPO, School Committee, St. Peter’s, the Congregational Church, Roxbury-Weston, the School Committee, and the METCO staff for their support. Ms. Rivers noted the full report would be posted online. Mr. Henry clarified that there were not budget reductions, noting that funds to support the coordinator position were reallocated to support other METCO programs. Dr. Connolly indicated the funds were used for Kindergarten Academy.

II.B. BWMPO Annual Report

Ms. Keitric Johnson, BWMPO Co-Chair, presented highlights of the year and indicated it was a year of transition, beginning with the new Director of METCO, Inc.. She noted a new location for meetings this year and indicated the resounding theme this year was “building community.” She expressed appreciation to all board members and parents who support the board. Mrs. Nagarajah said she has been a BWMPO member since 1998 and indicated her intent to remain involved even though her daughter will graduate in 2018. Mrs. Antoine said working together is what makes BWMPO the best parent program and expressed appreciation to the School Committee and Administration for coming to Boston.

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

II.C. Report on METCO Budget and Funding – As Mrs. Mahr was not present Mrs. Black noted this report would be rescheduled to the next meeting.

II.D. Update on Start Time/Scheduling

Mr. Henry reviewed the changes in school start time in the fall as approved by the School Committee. He discussed the impact on Boston students, and noted the anticipated beginning bus pick up time for Boston-resident students to be approximately 6:50 am. He noted they are working on ways to support athletes and the impact of a later dismissal time on sports. Some discussion took place. No action taken.

- II.D. Facility Projects Update (Proctor Field, Case House, Case Complex)  
Case House - Mrs. Black indicated the PBC was meeting later in the week, noting they are working to set up a working meeting regarding traffic and sidewalks.  
Proctor Field – Mr. Cobb reported there are a few punch list items being addressed and planning is underway for an opening celebration.
- 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 March 26, 2018.
- III.B. Business Actions
- Acceptance of Gift (Boosters)  
Mrs. Black presented a request that the Committee approve a gift from Weston Boosters to pay a stipend of \$2,500 to Athletics Department Aide Colleen Lanata for her work on the Boosters website.
- MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry, the School Committee voted 3-0-1, with Dr. Saini abstaining, to accept the gift from Boosters as proposed.
- Acceptance of Gift (Weston Youth Lacrosse)  
Mrs. Black presented a request that the Committee accept gift in amount of \$8,000 from Weston Youth Lacrosse toward cost of Proctor Field renovations.
- MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry, the School Committee voted unanimously to accept the gift from Weston Youth Lacrosse as proposed.
- Addressing the stipend donation, Mr. Henry asked if there are additional costs with budget ramifications. It was noted that Mrs. Mahr would know the answer. Dr. Saini indicated his reluctance to support the Boosters donation, citing a potential inequity as Boosters has funds to provide compensation while other organizations may not and/or other individuals may not have opportunity to be compensated.
- IV. Open Forum – Dr. Saini noted the difficulty of parking at Boston Police Headquarters and suggested another location for future meetings.
- IV. Executive Session  
MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mr. Henry at 8:23 PM the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn to Executive Session for purposes of discussion of legal matter, with the intent to not return to Open Session, with Mr. Cobb voting aye, Mr. Henry voting aye, Dr. Saini voting aye, and Mrs. Black voting aye.
- V. Adjournment  
MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mr. Cobb at 8:51 PM, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn from Executive Session with Mr. Cobb voting aye, Mr. Henry voting aye, Dr. Saini voting aye; and Mrs. Black voting aye.