

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
December 9, 2019

I. A. Call To Order

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 7:02 PM at Weston Middle School by Mr. John Henry, Chair. In attendance were Mrs. Danielle Black, Ms. Anita Raman, and Mrs. Rachel Stewart of the School Committee; Ms. Onika Jenkins, METCO Representative to the School Committee; Ms. Ally Kirk, Student Member of the School Committee; Dr. Midge Connolly, Superintendent; Dr. J. Kimo Carter, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning; and Mrs. Sheri Matthews, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations. Not present: Mr. Alex Cobb.

Also in attendance were Dr. Lee McCanne, Director of Technology and School Libraries; Ms. Jennifer Truslow, Director of Student Services; Mr. Anthony Parker, High School Principal; Dr. Steven Ribisi, Grade 6-12 Science Department Head; and Mr. Mitch Finnegan, Director of Wellness and Physical Education.

I.B. Chairman's Report –Mr. John Henry welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced members of the School Committee and Administration, and reviewed the agenda's Major Business items. Mr. Henry read a statement to address a communication posted by faculty regarding the budget process. (Statement attached and [posted on website.](#))

I.C. Superintendent's Report – Dr. Connolly provided recent highlights in the district, reporting that the Thanksgiving Day football game was broadcast on YouTube Live. She reported this was engineered through the school's Newtek Tricaster system, utilizing two cameras, slow motion instant replay, an on-screen scoreboard, and stellar play-by-play announcing by Michael Philipkosky and Connor DeBiasi; cameras were manned by Jeb Bartholomew, Joshua Li, and Zander Ingare. Faculty member Ted Garland supervised the self-motivated broadcast team and ran the on-screen scoreboard. Dr. Connolly said that technical feedback from YouTube reported 300 viewers.

Dr. Connolly reported that History Department Head Kerry Dunne, high school history teacher Kim Young, and Elementary Social Studies/Science Specialist Susan Erickson were presenters at the National Council for Social Studies conference in Austin, Texas in late November. She noted the difficulty of having a proposal accepted at organization's annual conference. Their sessions were, "Indian Ocean Diaspora Simulation- Unlocking Cultural Fusion," by Kim Young; "Beyond Saudi Arabia: Exploring the Arabian Peninsula," by Kerry Dunne; "Making Social Studies Matter Through Place Based Learning," presented by Kerry Dunne and Susan Erickson; and "Social Studies Practices Continuum: A Tool for Improving Inquiry-Based Instruction," presented by Kerry Dunne, Susan Erickson, and Chris Martell (a UMASS-Boston professor of social studies education):

Dr. Connolly reported that the College Board has awarded Weston placement on the 10th Annual AP District Honor Roll, which recognizes districts for increasing access to AP course work while maintaining or increasing the percentage of students earning scores of 3 or higher on AP Exams. She noted that recognition like this speaks to the dedication of faculty and students.

Dr. Connolly noted that Winter sports have begun. Mr. Henry welcomed Ms. Kirk, newly elected student representative to the School Committee.

I.D. Subcommittee Reports – None presented.

Mr. Henry reviewed the protocol for comments during the open forum.

I.E. Open Forum – No comments.

II.A. 2020-2021 Grade 6-12 Program of Studies

Dr. Carter presented proposed changes to the 2020-2021 Grade 6-12 Program of Studies, noting changes are in ELL (English Language Learners), Science, and Physical Education. He reported the ELL changes would provide academic English classes for emerging bilingual students; Science proposals in Engineering

and Forensics would enhance the Science curriculum, while utilizing and redistributing current staff, and add Honors level electives in Science; and the addition of a few more choices in physical education options. Dr. Ribisi and Mr. Finnegan both noted that the proposed changes are result of student feedback. The Committee discussed. Many audience members spoke about constraints in schedules and availability to accommodate students in their choices, and a suggestion of a “road map” for freshman students to have as a guideline might be helpful. Ms. Kirk agreed that would be helpful. Mrs. Black noted an external program review of Guidance was taking place, and this might be a good suggestion when feedback is requested. Mr. Parker said he would speak at the next meeting about the robust course offerings in the Program of Studies that are available to students.

Mr. Henry noted no changes are proposed regarding Middle School, including world languages, so they would have to wait to see enrollments after students sign up for courses. He noted the Committee could further discuss this before approving the Program of Studies at the next meeting. No action taken.

Mr. Parker provided a brief update on parking at the high school, noting that this was the first day of senior only parking. He indicated it would take a little time to see how many spaces may be available for emergency situations. Dr. Connolly said they are looking into cost of paving area where 24 faculty park on unpaved area. Mr. Parker noted that there are 129 seniors who were issued placards to park, and 150 faculty and staff have stickers. Parent Allyson Muzilla spoke about the environmental impact and suggested this be included in messages about parking.

II.B. Start Time Update

Dr. Connolly presented results of survey of students, parents and faculty regarding impact of the later start time. She noted that all groups report positive results, there are areas that need consideration, including the impact of early dismissal for athletic events, providing enough time to learn in class and time to meet with faculty for extra help, and how to increase/maximize positive impacts for non-Weston resident students. Dr. Connolly said a committee would be formed in the spring to review next steps further.

II.C. Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)

Ms. Lisa Lappi and Ms. Kathleen Davidoff, SEPAC Co Chairs, provided an update on the work of their parent volunteer group, a state-mandated Special Education Advisory Council. They noted the group is a resource for families with children with special needs and partner with Student Services, school officials, community resources and families. They indicated they would soon be conducting a survey and hope to share the results at a future School Committee meeting. Mrs. Stewart praised the group for its work and asked to be kept informed as to how the Committee might help. No action taken.

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

Case House - Mrs. Black reported that the project is 90% complete and on schedule.

III.A. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mrs. Black and seconded by Mrs. Stewart, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve minutes of November 18, 2019.

III.B. Business Actions – Certificate of Warrant

Ms. Matthews presented a Certificate of the Secretary, approval of warrants for payment.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mrs. Black and seconded by Ms. Raman, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrant for payment of \$2,116,163.91 by the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

IV. Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mrs. Black and seconded by Mrs. Stewart, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:50 PM.

Documents used by Committee:

- [Memo re Proposed Changes to the MS/HS Program of Studies](#)
- [Start Time Survey Update](#)
- [SEPAC Presentation](#)