

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE ONLINE MEETING

August 31, 2020

Webinar

<https://westonorg.zoom.us/j/94015330088>

Call to Order

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 7:04 pm by Mr. John Henry, Chair. Participating, were Mrs. Danielle Black, Vice Chair, Mrs. Rachel Stewart, Mr. Alex Cobb, and Ms. Anita Raman of the School Committee; Onika Jenkins, METCO Representative; Dr. Midge Connolly, Superintendent; Dr. J Kimo Carter, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning; and Ms. Sheri Matthews, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

Also present was Dr. Lee McCanne, Director of Technology and School Libraries; Dr. Jamy Gaynor, Director of Health Services; and Dr. Kathleen Mortimer, member of medical advisory group.

Mr. Henry reviewed the agenda, referenced updates on negotiations and reopening, mentioned that Dr. Jamy Gaynor would be speaking, followed by a brief Q&A, a discussion about non-WEA employee schedules and workdays, and an executive session for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining issues. He provided instructions for participation in the Q&A portion of the meeting.

Chair Report

Mr. Henry gave an update on negotiations. He reported that he felt an immense amount of progress has been made and faculty has been a part of every step. He noted that there a number of details remain that need to be addressed with WEA, but that he was very positive of the progress on the hybrid model and the reopening of schools on September 15th.

Mr. Henry answered a question regarding a drop-dead date for negotiations to which he answered no. He stated that the parties were attempting to complete negotiations as soon as possible, and that there would be a practical deadline as the first day of school approached.

Superintendent Report

Dr. Midge Connolly provided an update on progress toward reopening . She noted that the administrators, faculty and staff were working long hours to accomplish the many tasks required to reopen the schools. Dr. Connolly reported that a number of teachers and learning assistants had been hired and discussed the progress on student schedules.

Dr. Kimo Carter first acknowledged the efforts by school level teams focusing on schedules, matching cohorts and addressing issues in the schedules. He noted that schools would open to students on September 15th. He noted that he expected that elementary schools would have staggered start times to minimize the number of students entering the building at any one time, but that generally start time would be 8:00 am, with the end of in-person schooling at noon and the end time for all learning at 2:40 pm. The Middle and High schools will start at the day at 8:45 am and end by 3:15/3:30 pm. He mentioned that there will be two cohorts, one attending Monday and Thursday and the other attending Tuesday and Friday, with Wednesday being fully remote for all. Ms. Raman asked when the afternoon session of learning would begin. Dr. Carter stated elementary will start at 2:00 pm and needed to check for secondary schools.

Dr. Jamy Gaynor introduced herself and stated her background. She then called on Dr. Mortimer, who is also a part of the medical advisory board. Also, Dr. Joe Grocela introduced himself and gave his background.

Dr. Connolly noted that the district was developing health protocols, and that these protocols would start off more conservatively in order for the students to acclimate and adjust to safety procedures. She reported that she expected the protocols to evolve throughout the year.

Dr. Gaynor described and showed the rapid use algorithm she is developing for teachers and parents. This algorithm is designed guide decision-making in a number of different scenarios related to COVID-19. She described decision tree scenarios when student or staff members test positive for COVID-19 or are exposed to a person who tests positive or exhibits symptoms. Dr. Gaynor answered a question regarding quarantine recommendations and the impact of testing. She noted that a sibling does not need to quarantine if he/she was not directly exposed to an individual with the virus.

Dr. Carter then answered a question regarding whether a child who is quarantining from the hybrid option would become a part of remote learning academy, noting that there were a number of options for a child missing their in-school days in the hybrid model, including possible participation in the remote learning academy. In addition, Dr. Carter answered a question about synchronous videotaping in classrooms.

Dr. Grocela explained that if there was rapid, affordable testing available, the safety protocols would be subject to change. He noted that the precautions as written were designed to address the current situation. Also, Dr. Mortimer noted that the medical advisory board is working on securing rapid testing for Weston Public Schools once it is more widely available.

The medical advisory board members explained that they are discussing appropriate measures for transitioning to less-conservative protocols, noting that protocols may be adjusted on a school-by-school basis, and that the Middlesex county infection rate would be considered. The board will share additional details as protocols are developed and reviewed.

Mr. Henry began the Q&A portion of the meeting.

Dr. Connolly answered a question about students that will need health services' support. She explained that due to the previous six months spent isolating at home, the number of students needing assistance was expected to increase and that health services will be there to support the children. She also answered a question regarding students with IEP's and definitive guidelines, stating that solutions were being developed currently.

Dr. Carter answered questions about the remote learning academy schedule, noting that the schedule will mirror the hybrid model at the secondary level. He then discussed electives in Middle and High school remote learning academy programs., some electives will be offered on the remote learning academy. Dr. Carter reported that, at the elementary schools, the remote learning academy schedules would not necessarily mirror the hybrid model. He stated that there will be three academic learning blocks, two in the morning and one in the afternoon. They will be live sessions and teachers will facilitate those learning blocks. He also explained how asynchronous blocks and electives will work for the elementary level. He stated that solutions are being created for students or faculty who are not feeling well and need to stay at home. In addition, Dr. Carter discussed a question regarding flexibility in cohorts and class lists noting that there may be extremely limited flexibility due to the complexity of schedules.

Ms. Matthews answered a question about buses and monitors. She said that administration is working on the bus schedules. She noted that hiring bus monitors remains tremendously challenging, and asked that anyone was interested in being a bus monitor contact her (matthewss@weston.org).

The medical board discussed the impact of DESE and CDC recommendations, and stated that protocols are likely to change as new information comes out.

Dr. McCanne stated that if a student does not have access to the internet, the parents should email him, and they will have private discussion about options providing access.

Ms. Raman received a question about when the high school cohorts will be announced. Dr. Carter explained that the high school is working extremely hard on scheduling and cohorts would be announced as soon as possible.

Mrs. Black received the question regarding whether an entire class would be required to quarantine if a student tests positive. Dr. Connolly explained that it is likely that the teacher would be in quarantine, meaning that the entire class could move to a remote model. She noted that protocols were in development.

Mr. Henry asked for patience as there are a large number of moving parts to address in order to reopen schools. However, progress is being made and work is getting done. He stated any other questions will be answered through email and thanked the medical team for their time and effort.

Approval of the Start Dates for Non-WEA

Mr. Henry then discussed the non-WEA work schedules. Ms. Matthews reported that the interventionists started the same day as this committee meeting, the food services, aides, and paraprofessionals are planning to start September 8th, building substitutes will start on September 8th, learning assistants will start on September 9th, and the bus drivers will start on September 10th to review routes. Ms. Matthews also noted that Bus drivers will be trained on the cleaning procedures.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Ms. Raman, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the start work dates for non-WEA workers with Mrs. Stewart voting aye, Ms. Raman voting aye, Mr. Cobb voting aye, Mrs. Black voting aye, and Mr. Henry voting aye.

Approval of Minutes of July 27, 2020

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of July 27, 2020, with Mrs. Black voting aye, Mr. Cobb voting aye, Ms. Raman voting aye, Mrs. Stewart voting aye, and Mr. Henry voting aye.

Mr. Henry acknowledged and apologized that minutes have been behind because Mrs. Janet Bohlin retired, however Dr. Connolly stated a new person will be taking over the minutes and the minutes should be back on track soon.

Certificate of Warrant

Ms. Matthews presented a Certificate of the Secretary, approval of warrants for payments and requested School Committee permission to sign.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Ms. Raman, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrant for payment of \$150,732.08 by the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, to be signed by Ms. Matthews, with Mrs. Stewart voting aye, Ms. Raman voting aye, Mr. Cobb voting aye, Mrs. Black voting aye, and Mr. Henry voting aye.

Adjournment

Mr. Henry moved to adjourn the meeting in order to move to executive session to discuss collective bargaining issues without a return to open session.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and second by Ms. Raman, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:08 p.m. to executive session for the purposes of discussing collective bargaining issues without a return to open session with Mrs. Black voting aye, Mr. Cobb voting aye, Ms. Raman voting aye, and Mrs. Stewart voting aye, and Mr. Henry voting aye.

During the executive session, no action was taken.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mr. Cobb, the School Committee at 9:09 p.m. voted unanimously to adjourn from executive session without returning to opening session with Mr. Cobb voting aye, Mrs. Stewart voting aye, Ms. Raman voting aye, Mrs. Black voting aye, and Mr. Henry voting aye.

Documents used during the Meeting

- [Presentation regarding Safety Protocols](#)