

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE ONLINE MEETING

September 8, 2020

Webinar

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

Call to Order

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order at 7:05 pm by Mr. John Henry, Chair. Participating were Mrs. Danielle Black, Chair, Mr. Alex Cobb, Ms. Anita Raman, and Mrs. Rachel Stewart of the School Committee; 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 and Amy Kelly, Director of District Advancement.

Mr. Henry reviewed the agenda and noted that there will be no question and answer session during the meeting because a large amount of information will be distributed by principals and the district over the next several days. Mr. Henry stated that questions can be directed to building and district leaders and can always be emailed to members of the school committee.

Chair Report

Mr. Henry discussed Weston Education Association (WEA) negotiations, reporting that significant progress has been made with protocols and planning. Mr. Henry reported that in connection with WEA negotiations, the school committee offered to provide high powered air purifiers in education spaces. He noted, however, that procurement has been challenging. Mr. Henry reported that the district had identified alternative suppliers and that he was confident that the air purifiers will be in place by the beginning of school.

Mr. Henry encouraged residents to attend the town meeting on Saturday at 3:00 pm on Proctor Field, at which the town will vote on a proposed budget. Mr. Henry reported that the school budget was recommended unanimously by the school committee and supported by the finance committee, and Mr. Henry urged parents and community members to show support and vote. More information on the budget can be found on the town website.

Mr. Cobb emphasized the budget has been supported by the finance committee, but he wanted to make community members aware that people are campaigning against the budget. Mr. Cobb stated that this town meeting is extremely important to all the work the school committee has been doing and it is imperative that community members attend and support the budget.

Approval of WEEFC Proposals

Dr. Carter then presented two grant proposals from WEEFC. He reported that the first grant proposal is for to support the purchase of air purifiers in the amount of \$67,000. Dr. Carter reported that the second grant proposal is to fund an intern to put together remote music concerts in the fall. Students would record their parts separately and the funding, \$4,500, would go towards the intern sound mixing and editing.

MOTION: After discussion, upon motion made by Mr. Cobb and seconded by Mrs. Black, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the WEEFC proposals with Mrs.

Stewart voting aye, Ms. Raman voting aye, Mrs. Black voting aye, Mr. Cobb voting aye, and Mr. Henry voting aye.

Dr. Connolly thanked WEEFC Board and the community members for their generous grants.

Mr. Henry then discussed the sustainability issues from the agenda. The first item related to a request to have Field School photographed with the solar panels. Mr. Henry stated that he, personally, believes it will be a positive advertisement for an environmental purpose. The committee discussed which entity was requesting the photos for marketing purposes and Mr. Henry stated that more information should be collected prior to approving the photographs. Mr. Henry noted that the schools received a sustainability grant regarding LED lighting and that facilities would work with the implementation teams at each school to ensure safe protocols. Mr. Cobb noted that WEA should be informed when contractors enter the buildings.

Update on Reopening

Dr. Connolly reiterated Mr. Henry's point about the vast amount of information that will be coming out this week from the schools themselves as well as the district. She reviewed the plan for next week. Dr. Connolly stated that the B cohort will be attend on Tuesday, the first day of school, and the Wednesday use the Monday schedule. Therefore, the cohort schedule will be B, A, A, B for the first week of school. Dr. Connolly stated that communication will be coming next week about the four-day week. Dr. Connolly stated the first couple of weeks school are to acclimate the students to the new school routine and the new safety protocols. She reported that the administration still hopes to bring all K-5 students into school 4 days per week by October 15, and would continue to look at further expansion of in-school learning depending on public health status.

Dr. Carter then discussed professional development, noting three main areas of focus. The first focus was on planning at the faculty, department, grade and district levels. Dr. Carter reported that the district was working to integrate new and existing technology for the hybrid learning model.

Dr. McCanne reported that the district held 35 workshops on using these tools for hybrid learning. He noted that another 23 workshops were scheduled this week focusing on tools that enhance student engagement and assessment. Finally, he stated that these workshops will continue throughout the year.

Dr. Carter then discussed the second area of focus, safety. Dr. Carter thanked Jamy Gaynor, the new Director of Health Services, and the safety team for their direction and efforts on developing safety protocols and related training.

Dr. Carter then reported that the third main area of focus for professional development is educating teachers how to teach remotely most effectively. He noted that Ms. Amy Kelly, Director of District Advancement, was leading this training. Ms. Kelly thanked her colleague Liz Heichelbeche, and noted that they were facilitating three, three-hour sessions at each level regarding best practices in remote instruction. She stated that the first workshop focused on building an online community, expectations, routines, connections, and procedures. She reported that the second workshop covered supporting teachers to focus on what is essential for the students to know given time constraints, using feedback, formative assessment, and helping the students to reflect on their own learning. Finally, she reported that the third workshop provided ideas for creating an engaging environment for students and helping students develop the skills they need to engage in the work.

Dr. Carter then described the structure of the remote day. He stated that there are three types of instruction in the hybrid model: live, in-person instruction; live remote instruction; and asynchronous

instruction. He then discussed the breakdown of a hybrid day for each school (elementary, middle, and high).

Dr. Carter stated that a remote day at the elementary school begins with a live 15-minute morning meeting with students in school and remote. He stated the day includes 25-minute blocks of live instruction led by curriculum specialists and interventionists in literacy, math, and science. Dr. Carter reported that students will be divided into breakout groups to listen to either a live or recorded lesson and will have guided practice for math and literacy with the interventionist. He stated that science and social studies will have live or recorded lessons but learning boards instead of guided posts. He also stated that there will be three asynchronous learning sessions throughout the day. Dr. Carter then reported that students will have a special class in art, music or Spanish, noting that specials will be on a two-week rotation. He noted that two days per week, students will have a live remote session at 2 pm.

Dr. Carter reported that a typical hybrid day for a middle school will change slightly depending if it is remote or in person. For in-person days, students will have four blocks that deal with math, English, social studies, and science. On remote days, students will have four blocks that deal with world language, unified arts (two blocks), and health/physical education. Both remote and in person learning will have asynchronous learning for the afternoon with a check in at the end.

Dr. Carter then reported that for high school, each student follows their own schedule. The school will follow the 8 block schedule students are assigned to but broken up four by four. For example, Monday and Tuesday will follow A, B, C, & E classes and Thursday and Friday will follow the other four classes. For the remote day, half the class will be split up into remote and in person. For example, if I have A block English which is remote, my classmates will have English in-person at the same time. The teacher can then decide if he/she wants me to participate in the live class through simulcast or if my session will be asynchronous. The afternoon for remote students will include live sessions with teachers in the classes they took in the morning.

Dr. Carter reported that across the district, Wednesday is all remote and the whole class will meet at the same time. The teachers may separate students and work with smaller groups instead of teaching the whole class at once.

Dr. Connolly and Dr. Carter both stated all the information parents need will come out by the end of the week through email and will be posted on the school website. This information includes schedules, classes, transportation information, and other relevant information.

Dr. Carter described that core subjects will be taught on in person days and that both remote and in-person days will include asynchronous work. He also noted that students and teachers will be able to meet outside of scheduled class time for extra help.

In response to a question from Mr. Cobb, Dr. Connolly noted that both drop-offs and pick-ups will be staggered in order to help traffic flow, and discussed some possible police detail assistance and structures for car line-ups, noting that the plans will be flexible. In response to questions, Dr. McCanne noted that schedules would be out for secondary students by the end of the week and Dr. Carter discussed time spent on both in-person and asynchronous learning across the grade levels, as well as the Wednesday schedule at the Middle School.

Certificate of Warrant

Ms. Matthews presented a Certificate of the Secretary, approval of warrants for payment 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 \$1,218,382.34 by the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, to be signed by Ms. Matthews, with Mrs. Black voting aye, Mr. Cobb voting aye, Mrs. Stewart voting aye, and Ms. Raman voting aye.

Adjournment

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mrs. Black and seconded by Ms. Raman, the School Committee Voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:57 pm with Ms. Raman voting aye, Mrs. Stewart voting aye, Mr. Cobb voting aye, Mrs. Black voting aye, and Mr. Henry voting aye.

Documents used by Committee:

- [WEEFC Grant Proposals](#)

Recording of Meeting provided by Weston Media