

**WESTPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**AGENDA \***

(Agenda Subject to Modification in Accordance with Law)

**PUBLIC SESSION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

7:30 p.m., Staples High School, Cafeteria B (Room 301)

**ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM BOARD AND ADMINISTRATION**

**PUBLIC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS (15 MINUTES)**

**MINUTES:** January 13, 2019

**PRESENTATIONS**

- 1. Coleytown Middle School Construction Timelines Mr. Donald O'Day

**DISCUSSION/ACTION**

- 1. Gifts, *pages 1-3* (Encl.) Dr. David Abbey
- 2. Second Reading of the Following Policies: (Encl.) Ms. Karen Kleine
  - 6161.3, Comparability of Services, *pages 5-6*
  - 6162.3, Testing Program, *pages 7-8*
- 3. FY 2021 Education Budget Dr. David Abbey  
Mr. Elio Longo

**ADJOURNMENT**

\* A 2/3 vote is required to go to executive session, to add a topic to the agenda of a regular meeting, or to start a new topic after 10:30 p.m.

The meeting can also be viewed on Cablevision on channel 78; Frontier channel 6021 and by video stream @www.westportps.org

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION WELCOME USING THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES:

- Comment on non-agenda topics will occur during the first 15 minutes *except* when staff or guest presentations are scheduled.
- Board will not engage in dialogue on non-agenda items.
- Public may speak as agenda topics come up for discussion or information.
- Speakers on non-agenda items are limited to 2 minutes each, except by prior arrangement with chair.
- Speakers on agenda items are limited to 3 minutes each, except by prior arrangement with chair.
- Speakers must give name and use microphone.
- Responses to questions may be deferred if answers not immediately available.
- Public comment is normally not invited for topics listed for action after having been publicly discussed at one or more meetings.



Staff Names: Bill Plunkett, Director of Guidance at Staples and Adam Rosen, BMS Principal  
Phone Extension: 203-341-1225  
Grade Level: SHS  
Subject Area: Guidance  
Email: wplunkett@westportps.org

1. Describe the enrichment idea and how it fulfills the general criteria of the BEAR Grants program. What are basic goals and benefits to students; which students will this serve?

In spring 2019, the Staples School Climate Committee presented their report on the programming and support in place around students' transition from eighth to ninth grade at Staples. As noted in this report, research and practice have shown that students transitioning to high school often find that they experience a larger environment with increased academic demands, greater sense of personal responsibility, competing social interests, and heightened pressures around achievement, with college now looming on the horizon for many. Simultaneously, they are going through an intense period of social-emotional development. While challenging, making a successful transition is continually evidenced to be critical in a student's educational life.

One of the primary recommendations from this report was to implement the highly used and nationally recognized [Link Crew](#) program. (To name just a few, Link Crew is at Amity, Cheshire, Trumbull, Newtown, West Hartford, Wilton, Darien, and Norwalk and tons of other schools across the country.) Focused on the three primary high school transitions of safety, information, and connection, Link Crew is a peer mentoring and leadership program that connects upperclass students to ninth graders. Link Crew leaders undergo an intensive training over the summer and learn to be positive role models, motivators, and resources for students, guiding ninth graders in every way through their first year of high school and serving as someone they can turn to when needed in addition to school staff members. The program is highly effective because of the quality of the training and structured plan, starting with the first day of orientation in August and lasting through the end of ninth grade, and the fact that students are the ones taking the lead, serving as mentors, and connecting ninth grade students with one another, school resources, and meaningful activities. As is the case at other high schools with advisory programs, Link Crew would complement our new Connections program perfectly. We would likely pair 1-2 Link Crew student leaders with one staff member to facilitate each ninth grade Connections group of 10-12 students.

In conjunction with Connections, it is our hope that Link Crew would benefit *all* Staples students in some way, particularly those who may have traditionally felt excluded or disconnected or lack the support and resources that others have. Specifically, Link Crew serves to provide assistance

to and connection among ninth graders through the all-important transition to high school, leadership development in upperclass students, and positive interaction between staff and student leaders. Beyond school and peer connectedness, in other schools, Link Crew has also been found to have significant positive long-term effects on such factors as attendance, disciplinary referrals, substance use, involvement in activities, and overall improvement in school climate. (See [here](#) for published outcomes.) We wholeheartedly believe that a positive transition to Staples built around a sense of belonging and connectedness sets the foundation for a successful high school experience overall and that Link Crew has the potential to play a significant role in this process.

2. Who will do this with you? (i.e. other teachers, classes, grades)

Each member of the ninth grade class each year would participate and benefit from the modeling and support of Link Crew leaders. Perhaps just as valuable, the upperclass students themselves would benefit from the chance to serve as leaders and collaborate alongside staff members to support their ninth graders. We see tremendous opportunity for shaping the culture and climate at Staples as a whole through this program.

3. Describe the timeline, i.e. start date, duration, end date:

There is a three-day initial training for Link Crew staff members in the early spring. Staff then recruit and select Link Crew student leaders before the end of the school year. There is a two-day training for Link Crew student leaders in August prior to orientation for the ninth graders. Activities continue throughout the school year as ninth graders transition to the high school. We are committed to the goal of fully implementing Link Crew for the 2020-21 school year.

4. Provide a detailed budget request, i.e. exact cost of items, shipping and handling costs, total funds for project; be as specific as possible:

According to Link Crew representatives, the greatest expense is the cost for staff to attend the three-day initial training, which is what we're seeking assistance with through a grant. After this, ongoing costs estimated at about \$1,400 could be manageably worked into the school budget in future years, and we have proposed stipends for teachers overseeing the program to be included in next year's budget. (This [guide](#) has a detailed description of associated costs.)

For a school the size of Staples, Link Crew recommends training four staff members in order to best share tasks including communication with staff, logistical details, training students, and presenting material. We plan to train three Staples teachers to oversee the program, plus one administrator to serve as a liaison and provide additional support. Cost for the initial training is

\$2,495 per person, including room, food, materials, and a follow-up conference next fall, so the total cost for training would be \$9,980.

We are requesting \$2,495 from a BMS Bear Grant to cover the cost of training for one staff member.

5. Are you applying for additional funding from other sources such as Cultural Arts? If so, please let us know how much money you will receive.

We have already applied for and been approved for an SHS PTA Wrecker Mini-Grant for \$2,495. The high school budget will cover the cost for the remaining two staff members.

6. Have you communicated this proposal with Dr. Rosen?

SHS Principal Stafford Thomas has been in touch with Dr. Rosen about this program.

Thank you for your consideration!

This page has been intentionally left blank.

## Instruction

### Comparability of Services

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall pursue funding under Title I of the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to supplement instructional services and activities in order to improve the educational opportunities of educationally disadvantaged or deprived children.

All District schools, regardless of whether they receive Title I funds, shall provide services that, taken as a whole, are substantially comparable. Teachers, administrators and other staff shall be assigned to schools in a manner that ensures equivalency among the District's schools. Curriculum materials and instructional supplies shall be provided in a manner that ensures equivalency among the District's schools.

Comparability, is defined, for purposes of this policy, that the District uses state and local funds to provide services to Title I schools that are comparable to those offered in non-Title I schools in order to get federal funding under ESSA.

The Board of Education believes that at all times its schools should be equally as well equipped and maintained as may be possible within existing financial limitations.

It shall be the policy of the Board of Education to insure comparability of services funded by state and local sources in both Title I project schools and non-project schools. The Board of Education will therefore:

1. Maintain a district-wide salary schedule.
2. Provide services with federal, state and local funds in schools serving Title I project areas that are at least comparable to services in non project areas.
3. Use federal, state and local funds to provide for an equivalence among all schools in all schools with the same grade levels in teachers, administrators, auxiliary personnel.
3. Use federal, state and local funds to provide for an equivalence among all schools with the same grade levels in the provision of curriculum and instructional materials, books and supplies.

The District shall maintain records that are updated biannually documenting its compliance with this ESSA requirement.

Nothing in this policy will prohibit the administration from addressing identified problems at individual schools.

*Note: The comparability requirements of 20 U.S.C. Section 6321(c) shall not apply to a district that does not have more than one building from each grade span. (20 U.S.C. Section 6321(c)(4))*

Legal Reference: Title I Improving Basic Programs Operated by State and Local Educational

Agencies, Improving Every Student Succeeds Act, P.L. 114-95

20 U.S.C. Section 6321 (c)

Agostini v. Felton 521 U.S. 103 (1997)

Policy adopted:

WESTPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Westport, Connecticut



## Instruction

### Research: Testing

#### Testing Program

A plan of system-wide testing in addition to mandated statewide assessments, shall be developed and implemented as one indication of the success and quality of the district's total educational program. In the case of individual students, standardized achievement tests, in combination with other criteria, can provide an indication of student achievement. When appropriate, students may also be tested for mental ability, aptitude and interest.

The purposes of the district-wide testing program are to facilitate and provide information for the following:

1. **Student Achievement** - To produce information about relative student achievement so that parents/guardians, students and teachers have a baseline against which to monitor academic progress. Within the limitations of group testing instruments, the information should be useful to serve as a validation device for other measures of student progress.
2. **Student Counseling** - To serve as a tool in the counseling and guidance of students for further direction and for specific academic placement.
3. **Instructional Change** - To provide data which will assist in the preparation of recommendations for instructional program changes to:
  - a. Help teachers with instructional decisions, plans and changes regarding classroom objectives and program implementation;
  - b. Help the professional staff formulate and recommend instructional policy; and
  - c. Help the Board of Education adopt instructional policies.
4. **School and District Assessment** - To provide additional indicators of the progress of the district toward established goals.

The testing program is an integral part of the district's needs assessment and evaluation programs. The program should be developed primarily for furnishing needed information to decision makers, including the Board, administrators, teachers, parents/guardians and students.

The needs of these various groups shall be clearly identified, and the testing program shall be limited to obtaining that information which is needed and useful.

In planning, every effort will be made to see that testing contributes to the learning process rather than detracts from it. Efforts shall be made to incorporate necessary culture-free and culture-fair tests to assure reasonably accurate measurements.

The district shall not discriminate in the methods, practices and materials used for testing, evaluating

and counseling students on the basis of sex, race, national origin, creed, sexual orientation or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability. Discrimination complaints shall be processed in accordance with established procedures.

Parents shall be notified prior to any individual student testing, beyond that which is part of the regular classroom routine. Parental notification shall include the reason for the testing and an explanation of the test to be used. All such tests results shall be shared with parents.

Staff will receive in-service education in the use of designated tests, confidentiality issues and interpretation of test results.

A periodic review and evaluation of the district's testing program will be conducted.