

Westport School Committee
Regular Meeting
DATE: Thursday, January 20, 2022
TIME: 6:30 p.m.
PLACE: Virtual Meeting

Please click the link below to join the webinar:
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MINUTES

Members Present: Michelle Orlando, Melissa Pacheco (*arrived at 6:45 pm.*), Nancy Stanton Cross, Nancy Tavares, Antonio Viveiros

Also Present: Kevin Aguiar Assistant Principal Westport Middle School, Thomas Aubin Superintendent, Laura Charette Principal Westport Middle School, Stacey Duquette PreK-Gr. 4 Principal, Darren Elwell Director of Curriculum, Michael Grandfield Assistant Principal Westport High School, John Jack Keane Student Representative, Kerri McKinnon Principal Westport High School, Lori Melo Administrative Assistant, Shelby Orr Student Leader Junior class, Jason Pacheco Athletic Director, Sean Persico Assistant Principal Westport Middle School, Michelle Rapoza School Business Manager, Camryn Resendes Student Leader Junior class, Elaine Santos Special Education Director, Anthony Tomah Technology Director, 46 Community Participants

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance - Chair Tavares opened the Virtual School Committee Meeting at 6:30 pm. with a quorum of the members present, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Chair Tavares announced:

This meeting is being held remotely in accordance with the Governor of Massachusetts' March 12, 2020 order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c.30A, Section 20 and on June 16, 2021 Governor Baker signed an Act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency.

Comments and Statements from the Public - Chair Tavares received an email from a community member and shared the information on her behalf. Chair Tavares read a letter from Shannon Dufresne concerning mask breaks.

Mr. Aubin announced a member of the attendees would like to be recognized. Mr. Norman Abrahamson President of the Westport Federation of Teachers and high school teacher stated there are 2 items on tonight's agenda that are raising concerns. They are the high school master schedule and the 2023 fiscal budget. Both items will be affected by current negotiations and both items are premature to place on the agenda. Before the schedule is changed, negotiations with the WFT need to take place. This proposed schedule will be more expensive when carried out.

Chair Tavares mentioned both items are on the Informational Agenda and they will not be taking any action. They are working on goals and early discussions are important.

Ms. Stanton Cross mentioned they are obligated to work on the budget and have a time frame by law to present the budget to the public. They also have a budget meeting with FinCom on February 8, 2022. Ms. Stanton Cross said any input from the WFT is welcomed and she urged them to attend the FinCom meeting. Information about the meeting date will be sent to the WFT.

(Ms. Pacheco arrived here at 6:45 pm.)

III. Informational Agenda

B. Student Representative – (*taken out of order*) - John (Jack) Keane reported on school events. Semester 1 finals will take place on Monday and Tuesday, Semester 2 begins Wednesday. Thursday January 27 will be a half day with an 11 am. dismissal. Semester 2 Virtual Open House is February 1 from 6 - 8 pm. Information will be in the Wildcat Family News. All six girls' and boys' basketball varsity teams continue with their schedules. Varsity girls have won 3 games and loss 4. Opening game will be tomorrow in West Bridgewater at 6:30 pm. Varsity boys are undefeated with 9 wins and 0 losses. Opening game will also be tomorrow in West Bridgewater at 6:30 pm. Cheerleaders bring excitement to the game and the Pep Band is also playing. Drama Club rehearsals for the March musical performance is taking place. Freshmen Student Council is working on fundraisers for our school.

Chair Tavares asked if there were any comments or questions? There were none.

A. Superintendent Report - Mr. Aubin reported student and staff attendance for January 2022.

Mr. Tomah gave a technology update. They will hold a recycling day on the 26th for equipment like computers, monitors, printers, smart boards and miscellaneous cables. The remainder of the Wi-Fi will be installed over the February vacation. Cell phone booster system work started this Monday.

Mr. Aubin asked if there were any questions for Mr. Tomah? There were none.

Mr. Aubin announced the Commissioner and Governor had a public relations event introducing a new testing program. Mr. Aubin mentioned that every superintendent was sent a survey and asked about the choice to participate.

Ms. Santos explained that she and the nurses attended a webinar on January 19th that went over at home antigen tests for people who opt in to the program. Those opting in receive a kit with 2 tests. Testing will take place once a week on Thursdays. This will be the responsibility of staff, students, and parents. Positive results will be reported to the nurse. Test and Stay would stop but will still be used for symptomatic students. This at home testing will take the place of Test and Stay and eliminates contact tracing. This change was driven by data from the Test and Stay Program.

Discussion took place on the testing program. A question was raised about people that do not opt in. Ms. Santos explained the district had to complete a survey by tomorrow. They are working on the forms and links so letters explaining the program can go out. Ms. Santos further explained that people have a choice on whether to opt in or out.

Mr. Aubin requested Chair Tavares to hold the discussion in order to give the students present time to go over the dress code policy.

D. Westport High School Proposals - 3. WHS Dress Code *(taken out of order)*

Ms. McKinnon introduced Shelby Orr and Camryn Resendes the student leaders from the Junior class who worked on the dress code policy revisions.

Chair Tavares asked if there were any statements or questions on the dress code?

Mr. Viveiros mentioned the district has a dress code the problem is enforcement.

Ms. McKinnon explained revisiting the dress code was mentioned, so that is why these students worked on this.

Chair Tavares advised to bring the new revision to the Policy Subcommittee where it needs to be looked at.

Ms. Stanton Cross asked what did the students use as a template in order to come up with this? Camryn mentioned they did research and updated the dress code by using models of modern influences from other schools. Ms. Stanton Cross suggested to get a student survey out there to advocate your changes and tap into your peers to see what they want to change.

Members shared their appreciation on the student's work.

Ms. Pacheco would like documentation on what sources were used and she looks forward to reviewing the dress code in the Policy Subcommittee.

(Students Shelby Orr and Camryn Resendes left here at 7:07 pm.)

A. Superintendent Report continued - Discussion continued on testing.

Mr. Aubin shared that his first goal is protecting the safety of staff and students. Most schools are choosing to do this new testing method. The state is looking at the amount of labor on the nursing staff with contact tracing. If the committee chooses not to participate in the new testing program he can inform DESE.

Mr. Aubin added that PCR testing will be offered for staff on Tuesday from 2:30-4:30 pm.

Ms. Santos added the data from DPH on the Test and Stay Program showed very low rates of positivity across the state. An increase on vaccination rates also played a factor. The testing change is driven by data.

Ms. Stanton Cross shared concerns with losing contact tracing, however after discussion explaining the data a better understanding of the rationale has been reached.

Mr. Aubin shared concerns about the delivery methods from the state.

C. Bill Warrant: 1-28-22 - Chair Tavares reported a Bill Warrant dated 1-28-22 in the amount of \$396,033.83 was emailed to school committee members for review.

Chair Tavares asked if there were any questions? There were none.

D. Westport High School Proposals – Ms. McKinnon reported the proposals were in collaboration with the Student Council. Students, community members, and teachers and various stakeholders in the process and aligns with school improvement goals.

1. Community Service Graduation Requirements - 20 hours and begins with the class of 2026. Minimum of 5 hours per year. There is a log and benchmarks. For students transferring in hours are prorated. To become a member of the National Honor Society Community Service has to be completed beforehand. The district's current 8th graders would be the class of 2026 when this will take effect.

A question was raised; does community service replace the senior project? Ms. McKinnon said no the senior project is part of the English 12 course. It was mentioned to make the senior project more innovative. Ms. McKinnon is looking at making it fit for all learners. There was a concern raised about all students completing community service as a graduation requirement. This should be going to the Policy Subcommittee as an action item.

2. WHS Graduation Requirement Update - Ms. McKinnon explained that credits were changed to units to allow students more choices. The state also has requirements. A change under technology says 1 course and not the name of a specific course.

Ms. Pacheco would like to see the DESE requirements and how they match up with what is offered.

Ms. McKinnon asked if there were any further questions on community service or graduation requirements? There were none.

3. WHS Dress Code - Done above.

4. WHS Master Schedule 2022-2023 Implementation - Ms. McKinnon explained a 6 drop 1 schedule was chosen for possible implementation. No periods are less than 60 minutes. All classes 5 blocks. 4 out of 5 with 66 minutes and a 75-minute bubble block plus 30-minute lunch equal a total of 105 minutes.

Other information given:

5 blocks per day out of 6 blocks total

1 prep period

1 duty or common planning period

Full year schedule required per grade level

Freshmen have least flexibility - 5 out of 6 blocks are defined for them - 6th block PE every year / part time elective

Dual enrollment and work study need to take place after school

Teachers teach 75% of time in a block schedule - 6 out of 8 blocks in the year, blocks are 85 minutes

New schedule teachers teach 4 blocks per day in the year, this is less time teaching than with the block schedule

Ms. Pacheco requested to have how many minutes per day teachers teach now and how much time goes to common planning or planning.

Ms. McKinnon shared sample student schedules with color coded blocks for Days 1-6 for all grades 9,10,11,12. She also explained many different schedules and different options were considered when the scheduling committee had meetings to develop a schedule that would work.

Ms. McKinnon explained additional needs include another English, Science, Social Studies, Spanish and Portuguese teacher - 5 teachers total. It was noted the current contract states teachers cannot have more than 3 different prep periods. This means Portuguese 1,2,3,4 cannot be offered with one teacher (only 3).

Chair Tavares mentioned they will look at this further and develop questions. Chair Tavares asked if there were any questions on the schedule? There were none.

E. Westport Middle-High Sports Program – Mr. Pacheco gave an update on the sports program in order to answer questions he received and placed information in the packets for review. Items covered are current sports offered, season start dates, student athletes participation totals, enrollment numbers broken down by male/female and by grades, and FY15 statistics when the high school was a standalone school.

The Mass League is asking schools for Spring program participation in order to build a schedule next week. Ms. Charette will let the league know the timeline. There is no governing body for middle school sports, therefore principals set season dates.

Intramural basketball will start next Wednesday.

Chair Tavares asked the committee if they had time to review the sports information and if there are any questions?

Ms. Stanton Cross asked if 7 and 8th graders played on the JV varsity team? Mr. Pacheco said yes, the number was 17 players for 7 and 8th grade played last year.

Ms. Stanton Cross asked what are the plans to promote the intramural program? Mr. Pacheco will make announcements in school, Facebook, place on school website and get an adviser on board.

Ms. Pacheco asked if a decision on Spring sports is needed tonight? Mr. Pacheco said yes, they received a letter yesterday sent to all Mass League principals. Mr. Pacheco explained the principals get together and set dates for the season. They do not go into June and do not start in summer. They wait until school starts. Ms. Pacheco would like additional information before making a decision. In addition, Ms. Pacheco would like statistics on how many 7 and 8th graders that moved into a varsity team were retained in the high school.

Ms. Pacheco asked if a survey was sent to students or any calls made for tryouts to see if a middle school and high school team can be fielded? Mr. Pacheco explained sports can't start until March 3. Even though signups can take place, tryouts and competing on different levels are affected by this timeline.

It was noted that enrollment numbers have impacted middle school sports.

Discussion took place on using 7 and 8th graders to fill high school sports.

Mr. Pacheco explained varsity and JV teams for baseball.

F. Reconfiguration of the WES and MAC - Mr. Aubin asked to table this to get more information.

G. FY23 Budget Discussion - Mr. Aubin asked to table this item. Work is still being done.

H. DESE Mask Requirement Update - Mr. Aubin shared that when guidelines come down from the state it is out of our jurisdiction. Mask requirements have been extended through February. In order to remove masks, there needs to be an 80% vaccination rate and we are not there yet.

Leadership shared how they handle mask breaks:

Ms. McKinnon shared at the high school individual teachers determine when to bring students out on mask breaks.

Ms. Charette shared at the middle school for mask breaks teachers create schedules to determine when students go out, in hallway, or in classroom. She noted many staff members have been out and this may make an impact on the schedule.

Ms. Duquette shared at MAC and WES there is built in recesses and snack is outside for fresh air breaks and at lunch time. Mask breaks occur morning, midday, and with specialists in afternoon.

Discussion took place about the use of masks during lunch time.

Chair Tavares requested information from leadership on when mask breaks are taking place to ensure students are receiving them.

COVID case numbers are on the website, Facebook and sent to staff.

I. Subcommittee Updates - Mr. Viveiros reported that everything is good with the school building project.

VI. Action Agenda

A. Review and Act on Minutes of Thursday, January 6, 2022 -

A motion was made to approve the Minutes of Thursday, January 6, 2022.

Motion by Stanton Cross, seconded by Pacheco

5/0/0

B. Review and Act on FY23 Proposed Education Budget - Item tabled.

V. **Routine Matters** - Correspondence and Notices - There were none.

VI. **Topics the Chair could not Reasonably Anticipate Forty-eight (48) Hours in Advance of the Meeting** - There were none.

VII. **Adjourn** - A motion was made to adjourn. With members being present and voting individually and unanimously, the motion passes.

Motion by Orlando, seconded by Viveiros

5/0/0

Roll call vote:

Orlando	Yes	Pacheco	Yes	Stanton Cross	Yes	Tavares	Yes	Viveiros	Yes
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The Virtual School Committee Meeting adjourned at 9:02 pm.

MEETING DOCUMENTS

Bill Warrant: 1-28-22

Westport High School Proposals Community Service Graduation Requirements; WHS Graduation Requirement Update; WHS Dress Code; WHS Master Schedule 2022-2023 Implementation

Westport Middle-High Sports Program

Extension of DESE Mask Requirement

Westport Community Schools Positive COVID Case Counts

SY2021-22 COVID-19 Testing Program for Districts and Schools

School Building Committee Minutes December 15, 2021

Submitted by Sharon Pinho School Committee Recording Secretary