

**Westport School Committee
Work Session
DATE: Tuesday, August 31, 2021
Time 6:00 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, Nancy Stanton Cross, Nancy Tavares (*arrived at 6:10 pm.*)

Members Absent: Antonio Viveiros

Also Present: Thomas Aubin Superintendent, Jennifer Chaves Extended Day Director, Darren Elwell Director of Curriculum, Lori Melo Administrative Assistant, Michelle Rapoza School Business Manager, Elaine Santos Director of Special Education, Anthony Tomah Technology Director, 12 Community Participants

I. Call to Order - Superintendent Aubin opened the Virtual School Committee Work Session at 6:04 pm. with a quorum of the members present.

Superintendent Aubin 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.

II. Discussion of the American Rescue Plan Act (ESSER III) -

Mr. Aubin welcomed everyone to this special Work Session concerning the American Rescue Plan Act/ESSER III which deals with federal and state government providing funding to schools. This Work Session gives the public the opportunity to make comments on how the Westport School District will be spending the money.

A presentation was shown entitled "**Westport Community Schools Special School Committee Work Session American Rescue Plan Act**". Information was provided on how Westport is spending these funds from the ESSER I and ESSER II allocations. Westport Community Schools will be receiving a total of \$1,607,934.

(Ms. Tavares arrived here at 6:10 pm.)

Slide 1 - Listed Priorities

Priority 1 - Protecting the health & safety of our students and staff

Priority 2 - Ensure continuity of educational mission, regardless of teaching mode

Priority 3 - Social and emotional needs

Priority 4 - Student engagement PreK-4

Priority 5 - Invest in long-term initiatives to increase quality and quantity of communications with stakeholders

Slide 2 - FY20-FY21 Covid-19 Expenditures

Technology - Chromebooks and laptops, fiber optics, purifiers, cleaning products, school lunch (decrease in school lunch revenue), substitute costs, instructional software, PPE & supplies, tents, nursing costs, attorney fees, Professional Development, maintenance/custodial costs **Total costs \$1,519,522.**

Mr. Tomah explained previously the district leased the fiber, now the fiber will be purchased and owned by the school district. They will pay for upfront costs and the long-term benefits will be paid back in about 5 years.

Slide 3 - ESSER II Approved Allocations FY22

Technology - Wi-Fi for MAC and WES, interactive TV's, social emotional learning, student enrichment & engagement, online systems to minimize in-person contact (DocuSign, Aspen, etc.), instructional software I-Ready, tents-storage rental (outdoor mask space), nursing costs, Professional Development - Ruler Training, maintenance and custodian costs. **Total costs \$698,000.**

Mr. Tomah said the Wi-Fi technology will bring MAC and WES up to par with the new middle high school. The interactive TV's have a computer built in with touch screens.

Mr. Elwell explained I-Ready is a diagnostic software for Math and ELA. They will be using this for K-12 in Math and Reading to get data to help form instruction.

Slide 4 - COVID 19 Positive Cases Students and Staff SY 2020-2021

Total cases 116

Slide 5 - Thank you for support

Mr. Aubin asked if any attendees would like to share their thoughts?

Ms. Stanton Cross requested a more detailed breakdown of programming for the Pre-K - Gr. 4 engagement. Ms. Stanton Cross mentioned to be mindful that ESSER is one-time funding. Anything used with these funds can benefit us now and in years to come. Make it justifiable to place in the school budget and be supported in the future. She attended a workshop which advised to do things to improve your schools and community with a purpose and be viable enough for stakeholders to want to keep and support the programming in the future. Mr. Aubin added at the conference there were many Business Managers that informed attendees to avoid creating structural deficits that will not be supported later.

Ms. Chaves reported the Extended Day just enrolled the 70th child. Presently the Extended Day opens at 7 am. and ends at 6 pm. Parents would like to have Pre-K after school care and Ms. Chaves would love to see it expand. This year the Extended Day will be in one building located in the pods. Students at WES and middle school will be bussed over, using ESSER III funds to provide this service. Housing the program in one area will be easier to manage. Extended Day bus also provides a late bus for students.

Ms. Santos explained some changes to the Pre-K program. They have 3 classes with one extended to be a 5-day classroom. Ms. Santos is calling parents on the wait list for their interests. Depending on results, they may open an additional 1 or 2 classes. There are 20 students on a wait list right now.

Mr. Aubin asked if there were any questions from the committee?

Ms. Pacheco gave thanks for the detailed presentation.

Ms. Orlando thanked everyone for being present to listen and for working on gathering the information for the presentation. It was very informative.

Ms. Tavares shared that she appreciates all the hard work to prepare for these programs. The continuation of conducting air testing to stay safe is also a plus. These programs will have long-term benefits for the schools and families. Ms. Tavares asked if the Aspen Program replaces School Bucks? Ms. Rapoza is still working on the details of the Aspen Program and will have more information at a later date.

Ms. Chaves thanked everyone that was part of the decision-making process to house the Extended Day all in one place. Ms. Chaves shared that parents are relieved their children are on the same bus. One parent has a child in each school.

Norman Abrahamson asked if ESSER funds will be used for COVID testing on a regular basis? Mr. Aubin reported working with the nursing staff, they received funding for COVID testing. This will pay for the Test and Stay Program.

Ms. Santos explained the Test and Stay Program allows nurses to test student that were identified as close contacts. The student is tested for 7 days. If the days occur over a weekend they would test on the following Monday. As the year progresses there are other options for testing like symptomatic testing that may be looked at. Pooled testing was not done at this time.

Mr. Aubin shared this information. There will be enrichment and sports, offering middle school sports, enrichment for Pre-K - Grade 4 will be running and soccer. Mr. Aubin is meeting with the art and music community to expand on programming. They will continue to do air quality testing in the new school. Mr. Aubin shared if any teaching staff has ideas for any enrichments or curriculars they can submit a written proposal for review and consideration. There will be a transitioning of the phone systems, having all buildings connected and talking to each other. This will include all Town Hall departments. Mr. Tomah verified this will be ready by the start of school with Friday as the cutoff. Send an email if there are any questions.

Ms. Rapoza shared this information.

Preliminary bus routes were sent out 2 weeks ago. This Thursday updated bus routes will go out. There is a way for parents to know what their child purchased during the lunch transaction. Ms. Rapoza will let parents know that limits and blocks can be placed on their child's account for lunch time purchases. A panini machine and a sandwich wrapper machine were purchased. There is a delivery problem with some of the food items. Mr. Aubin is working on a Farm to Table initiative for access to readily available food. Aspen Program will be rolled out in SY2023 in order to get people acclimated. New website will be available with a target date of October 1. Training videos will be available for parents and students.

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

			Motion by Stanton Cross, seconded by Pacheco			4/0/0
<u>Roll call vote:</u>						
Orlando	Yes	Pacheco	Yes	Stanton Cross	Yes	Tavares Yes

The Virtual School Committee Work Session adjourned at 7:01 pm.