

Westport School Committee
Work Session
DATE: Thursday, January 16, 2020
TIME: 5:00 p.m.
PLACE: Westport Jr./Sr. High School Media Center

MINUTES

Members Present: Michelle Orlando, Melissa Pacheco, Nancy Stanton Cross, Nancy Tavares, Antonio Viveiros

Also Present: Mitchel Aho Principal JRSRHS, Karen Archambault, Assistant Principal SRHS, Laura Charette, Assistant Principal JRHS, Darren Elwell Director of Curriculum

- I. **Call to Order** – Chair Viveiros called the Work Session to order at 5:05 pm.
- II. **Comments and Statements from the Public/Citizen’s Participation** – There were none.
- III. **Informational** – WJRSRH Student/Teacher Schedule 2020-2021 –

This Work Session is being held in order to review the proposed scheduling changes for the Westport High School and to be able to ask questions.

The present block schedule where students have 90-minute classes is a problem. These periods are too stretched out. Having shorter periods gets rid of wasted time. Teachers are teaching 3 hours and 24 minutes 4 days out of 6 days. More instruction time is needed.

Discussion took place about the limited voluntary time from teachers, especially before or after school. The teacher’s contract states one 1-hour meeting per month is allowed. This should be looked at as part of collective bargaining when starting a new contract. Mr. Elwell referred to the teacher’s contract that states 6 blocks or 3 double blocks minimum of 40 consecutive minutes off per day. Discussion was held on specifics of the teacher’s schedules. It was noted to be mindful of the language in the teacher contract.

Ms. Pacheco added that she would like to hear Dr. Reese’s opinion on the scheduling issues.

Mr. Elwell explained as a district they have some very real obligations. A new school will be offered; however, it may not be accredited if suggested improvements are not met. Mr. Elwell mentioned that every 10 years NEASC comes to the district and at the last 5 year review they cited the curriculum process needed to improve. The last visit from DESE cited the lack of district oversight in curriculum. Both entities have clear expectations for this work to be improved. Mr. Elwell has only 6 hours with teachers by the end of the year. Each teacher has to prepare 1 unit of study (about 4 wks.) at end of the year. Options to try and get the work done would be to offer up before and after school sessions or use common planning time.

Mr. Elwell described what he has done with curriculum common planning at MAC. Using Keys to Literacy there have been targeted and focused discussions around student data and work samples. Teachers are instructed on what to bring to the next meeting. He is looking to bring this model to the high school and understands that clear expectations and leadership are needed.

Mr. Aho said they are working on using data to inform instruction and train staff to do this in a shared agenda. Taking notes shared on a google drive and writing curriculum in a DBQ format are some meaningful ways to accomplish these tasks. The contract does not allow for this work to be done after school and PLC’s does not provide time.

Ms. Archambault explained PLC'S Professional Learning Community and used math as an example. Meetings are held to monitor student's work and improve instruction. Teachers share student work, dig into it based on the standards and look at how to tackle the parts that need improvement. They also look at MCAS scores and target areas that student's need improvement on. Instruction is retooled and results have been proven to raise test scores through the roof. Right now, the high school does not do this because of the schedule.

Schedules

Ms. Charette said they looked at other district's schedules. A handout was distributed showing various schedules. Bell schedules from other districts were reviewed that included Dartmouth High School, Diman Regional Vocational High School, Somerset Berkley Regional High School, Seekonk High School, Durfee High School, and Joseph Case High School.

Dartmouth High School - 7 plus PASE- 7 periods / drop 2 62 minutes instruction

In a day, there are 5 periods plus a PASE period where students can sign up with the Media Center, a teacher for extra help, gym, etc. Teachers have the ability to override this period. Everyday students have a PASE block where they can make a choice, this could be an opportunity for enrichment.

DIMAN - 6 period day, teach 4 out of 6 periods not sure about common planning and duties

Somerset Berkley - modified block

Seekonk HS - 7 drop 2 with 5 classes a day, teach 5 out of 7, 3 common planning times and 2 duties in a cycle, 2 free periods away from students common plan and duties

A handout with Westport Junior Senior High School SY 20-21 Senior High Bell Schedule was distributed to everyone. 6 periods drop 1 is the schedule being proposed for Westport

Ms. Tavares asked if this schedule gives the best support and does it offer what we want to achieve programmatically? Mr. Aho answered yes, this will open the schedule up. The 20 hours of community service requirement will be phased in. The schedule is driven by what students select. Mr. Aho is looking at what courses we have now and how does it align with the standards. Computer Design is one area he would like to add. Band and music schedule will improve and students will have the opportunity to take more classes not NEW classes.

Middle school schedule will remain the same and they have common planning right now in the schedule. High school will be on same day.

Graduation Requirements

Ms. Archambault reported that they are still working on graduation requirements and program of studies. Mr. Aho said right now there is 150 credits to graduate, this may change to 120 credits. Graduation requirements are approved by the SC. MassCore requires 4 years of English and 4 years of Math. Westport has 2 years of a language; however, most colleges want 3 years. Mr. Aho will look within the schedule to see if certain courses can fit.

Common Planning Time

Common planning time was discussed. Mr. Aho mentioned in this time of common planning teachers go through data, this data is used to drive instruction. He agrees it needs to be specified. There is 1 common planning and 2 duties per week. Duties include lunch supervision, bathroom, stairway or hallway duty 40-minute duration. The block is split between 2 teachers. In addition, there is a lot of class coverage when teachers are out and no substitutes are available. Mr. Aho suggests to keep the schedule equitable.

Discussion took place on what takes place in common planning time. There is a rolling agenda and items worked on together include data from Dibels, MCAS, student work samples, PSAT. The meetings will be driven by trained administrators, coaches, principal, or content specialists. Emphasis was placed on the need for accountability and implementation of proper measures to ensure this takes place.

Ms. Archambault works with teachers during common planning time to help them walk themselves through how to work collaboratively and to look and analyze assessments. She described the use of a meeting wise agenda book with meeting wise norms such as be on time, don't use cell phones and hold each other accountable.

It was noted that TA's are not in common planning.

Timeline

Timeline for rolling out this new schedule was discussed. Ms. Charette would like to be able to present this schedule at the 9th grade orientation on January 21. Students need their schedules before they leave. Students choose classes in March and Guidance looks them over.

IV. Adjourn – A motion was made to adjourn.

Motion by Pacheco, seconded by Tavares

5/0/0

The School Committee Work Session ended at 6:44 pm.