

**Westport School Committee  
Regular Meeting  
DATE: Thursday, September 19, 2019  
TIME: 6:30 p.m.  
PLACE: Westport Jr./Sr. High School Media Center**

**MINUTES**

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

**Also Present:** Dr. Gary Reese Superintendent

**Special Guests and Presenters:** Amy Tran Student Representative, Mitchel Aho Principal Jr./Sr. High School, Stacey Duquette Principal WES, Anthony Tomah Director of Instructional Technology

**I. Call to Order** - A quorum being present, Chair Viveiros called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. Notice of Recording of Meeting** (M.G.L. 30A:20f) - Chair Viveiros announced the meeting was being recorded.

**Comments and Statements from the Public** – Parent Cheryl Abrahms requested for the SC to re-evaluate the current homework policies and the grading policies in order to make a change in which homework is assigned and graded. She feels the way homework is currently assigned does not assist in learning. It was recommended to refer this item to the Policy Subcommittee for further research.

**III. Informational Agenda**

A. Student Representatives' Report – Amy Tran reported school pictures have been taken, Open House was successful and the last week of October is Spirit Week and Haunted Halls.

B. Superintendent Report – Dr. Reese reported that the current MCAS data is embargoed until September 24 when it will be officially released and cannot be publicly announced until then.

Dr. Reese was pleased to announce the district has received the Mass IDEAS: School Redesign Grant focusing on school culture and climate.

The next phase of the MSBA accelerated roof repair project is underway with about 4 weeks to execute contracts, then submit documentation to the MSBA. MSBA has assigned Vertex Companies as the OPM and SLAM Collaborative as the designer.

The Adult Education offerings have been advertised in a brochure, Facebook and Twitter. Courses will run from October through November and include exercise and wellness, weigh reduction, handwriting analysis, legal, and financial management.

Dr. Reese attended the Business to Business meeting today and spoke on the district's School to Career Program, Adult Education Program as well as district highlights.

C. Bill Warrant Update – Chair Viveiros reported the bill warrant was reviewed and signed, the amount will be given at the next SC meeting.

D. WES School Improvement Plan – Ms. Duquette went over the goals and action steps of the WES Improvement Plan for the 2019-2020 school year, referring to this document as a clear vision aligned to the district plan.

A motion was made to approve the WES Improvement Plan as presented by Ms. Duquette.

Motion by Stanton Cross, seconded by Pacheco

5/0/0

E. WJSH School Improvement Plan – Mr. Aho went over the goals and action steps of the WJSHS Improvement Plan for the 2019-2020 school year. He noted improvement in the AP scores listed on page 7. Mr. Aho suggested in the future to separate the Open House event between the middle school and high school for a better flow in structure.

A motion was made to approve the WJSHS School Improvement Plan as presented by Mr. Aho.  
Motion by Stanton Cross, seconded by Pacheco 5/0/0

F. **Chromebooks** – Mr. Tomah explained costs associated with chrome books. There are hidden factors that include looking at your Wi-Fi network, providing enough tech-support and professional development for teachers. To bundle this into a program have this 1/3 of the cost including inhouse work with your own teachers. He is working on a 5-yr. replacement plan and has evidence of machines being 7-9 years old. The ratio between tech support and machines was estimated at 400 machines per 1 tech, by adding 700 machines 1.5 techs would be needed.

Discussion took place on the plan of phasing one-to-one chrome books into one grade at a time. Mr. Tomah can come up with a roadmap, but not an extensive plan at this time. He still needs time to assess what resources are available. Phasing this in would lessen the burden and leasing is a cost-effective way to implement according to Mr. Tomah.

It was noted that the SC needs a plan in order to allocate funds into a budget for the upcoming year. Getting an IT footprint into the new school will take the district to the next level.

A question was raised on whether one-to-one initiatives have improved academic achievement. Mr. Tomah worked in several districts that either fully or marginally applied one-to-one. There was some success, but not across the board improvement. There are studies on both sides. He cannot provide evidence at this time. Giving students the skill set needed for their future was also mentioned by providing chrome books students will be exposed to these 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

Dr. Reese will do some research, talk to other communities and bring back data. Dr. Reese further clarified that the district is not copying textbooks and violating copyright.

G. **School Building Committee Update** – Chair Viveiros reported that the SBC met last night. Temporary fencing went up and trailers will be placed on site. Marker locations will be identified and the foundation work will begin mid-October. Early bid packages came back \$600,000 below budget. In addition, discussion took place about cleaning up debris for well access, payment of utilities fees and drainage at WES will be channeled into a subsurface drainage structure. New tennis courts lights and type of lights was explained to the neighbors. Groundbreaking ceremony will take place on October 8 at 9:30 am at the middle school site. Mr. Viveiros donated a Wildcat golf cart for the Athletics Department.

H. **FY20 Capital Improvement List** – Chair Viveiros reviewed the FY20 items from the Capital Improvements List. List includes the following items:

**MAC**

Install interior/exterior security cameras at MAC \$75,000

Inclusive playground at MAC \$100,000

MAC kitchen equipment \$175,000

**WES**

Install interior/exterior security cameras at WES \$75,000

Inclusive playground at WES \$100,000

**District**

One-ton dump truck \$55,000

Munis accounting payroll software - between town and school \$389,039 / or school only \$105,739

Ms. Stanton Cross brought up the fact that the Capital Improvement List does not include funds for the future location of administration office space. Discussion took place on converting the pods, finding office space and the use of the campground land.

Chair Viveiros requested members review and determine the importance of items on the list. Send any additions to Dr. Reese. Dr. Reese will provide information on the costs associated with the mobile pods and a list of district owned vehicles.

I. **First Read: JICA Policy – Student Cell Phone and Electronic Devices** – Ms. Pacheco reported that the Policy Subcommittee met and reviewed the district's current policy and other current policies. The following items were noted to update; change Massachusetts to Westport Public Schools, add sentence Principal approved school sponsored events, athletic travel, or extracurricular activities, take out in passing time between classes wording,

under grades 7-12 section - use shall instead of should, under paragraph 3 - remove permission from a teacher or administrator and add principal, adjust bullets, add in accordance with respective school's policy after the words progressive discipline.

Discussion was held on cell phone policy for staff. Dr. Reese will review the employee policy for cell phones. A question about this being part of the collective bargaining unit was raised. Legal Counsel will be consulted if needed. Staff cell phone use can be a separate policy and first read.

Ms. Pacheco will revise the updates and bring it back to the committee.

J. Uniform Survey – Dr. Reese reported 623 responses to the school uniform survey. Mostly parents with students replied at 83%. Three questions asked were does uniforms positively impact academics, student behavior and are you in favor of school uniforms. Results were 46.1% not be in favor, 42.2% in favor, and 11.7 % not sure. A total of 23% wanted a phasing approach and it was equally split which school should have uniforms first. SC members will read over the comments and bring up this topic at the next meeting. Mr. Aho will work with Student Council to get more information from students on their survey encounters.

K. Audit Subcommittee Update – Ms. Orlando reported on attending the first meeting of the Audit Subcommittee. A list of all the issues was created, with the next meeting to be held on October 7, 2019. The committee was established to make recommendations.

**IV. Action Agenda**

A. Review and Act on Minutes of Thursday, September 5, 2019 –

A motion was made to approve the Minutes of Thursday, September 5, 2019.

Motion by Tavares, seconded by Stanton Cross

5/0/0

V. **Routine Matters – Correspondence and Notices** – Chair Viveiros acknowledged receipt of the MAC newsletter.

VI. **Comments and Statements from the Public** – There were none.

VII. **Additional Agenda Issues** – Chair Viveiros mentioned the Policy Subcommittee will be doing further research on the district's homework policy and will include Mr. Elwell in the discussions. Any further items of concern can be sent to Dr. Reese.

VIII. **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

5/0/0

Roll call vote:

Pacheco Yes Stanton Cross Yes Tavares Yes Viveiros Yes  
The School Committee meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

**Meeting Documents**

WES School Improvement Plan 2019-2020  
WJSHS School Improvement Plan 2019-2020  
JICA Policy – Student Cell Phone and Electronic Devices, First Read  
FY20 Capital Improvement List  
Uniform Survey

*Submitted by Sharon Pinho School Committee Recording Secretary*