

Westport School Committee
Work Session
DATE: Wednesday, July 24, 2019
TIME: 4:30 p.m.
PLACE: Westport Jr./Sr. High School Media Center

MINUTES

Members Present: Michelle Orlando, Melissa Pacheco, Nancy Stanton Cross (*arrived at 5:44 pm.*) Nancy Tavares, Antonio Viveiros

Also Present: Mitchel Aho Jr./Sr. High School Principal, Stacey Duquette WES Principal, Cheryl Greeson MAC Principal, Dr. Gary Reese Superintendent

- I. **Call to Order** – Chair Viveiros opened the Work Session at 4:40 pm.
- II. **Comments and Statements from the Public/Citizen’s Participation** – There were none.
- III. **Informational**
 1. Discuss number of staff, staff schedules, and work hours
 2. Discuss handbooks and discipline

Chair Viveiros began by sharing that the SC’s biggest concerns are with school climate and culture. Dr. Reese mentioned there will be a focus on school culture, starting with this year’s convocation covering 1. culture and climate and 2. communicating and holding staff accountable. Dr. Reese mentioned applying for two grants, details are explained later on.

A discussion on the use of PBIS, Responsive Classroom, PAWS and social emotional learning took place.

Behaviors and consequences were discussed at all 3 schools. Having teachers monitor hallways and improved bus supervision were topics for discussion.

Mr. Aho made an adjustment to the HS lunches, now there are 3. Before there was 40 minutes to a lunch shift with 5 minutes travel time on each end. Last year this left 10 minutes of unstructured time. The lunch shifts have been adjusted to having 30 minutes for students and faculty. Morning break from 9-9:20 am. has been eliminated.

Cell phone use – Presently students can use cell phones for instructional purposes and can use them in the cafeteria. Some members would like to see cell phones placed in lockers and have limited use. Discussion about cell phones being stolen when left in lockers and also the medical use of cell phones allowed under a 504 was mentioned. Dr. Reese will further explore the cell phone use policy.

(Ms. Stanton Cross arrived here at 5:44 pm.)

This past school year there has been an increase of suspensions at the HS, up to 167. Students are being held accountable for their actions, according to Mr. Aho. Third and fourth grade detentions also have been reinstated, according to Ms. Duquette. Ms. Greeson went over her use of lunch detentions in the cafeteria and the success rate of such implementation.

Discussion took place on the wording of the staff/ faculty handbook for acceptable attire. Dress down on Fridays and payment of \$1 as a collection for a purpose/charity has been used in the past. Students having respect and their level of expectations linked to proper attire was mentioned as well as engaging teachers in the process to develop how best to represent the school. Dr. Reese mentioned the need to revisit the handbook for attire.

Duties of the SRO were discussed and there is an agreement (MOU) that is signed every year. Mr. Aho explained there are no smoking signs on the entire school property including the parking lots. In order for the SRO to be able to issue a ticket to anyone in violation of smoking, the district will need to request ticketing permission from the BOS. In addition, Mr. Aho mentioned the use of the court system and how students are turned back to the school.

Handbook – A discussion on whether to have just one central handbook or have a handbook for the different grades as well as a main handbook took place. Dr. Reese mentioned having a leadership retreat in August and looking at the handbooks will take place at that time.

Schedule – The high school teacher's schedule has 4 blocks; each teacher has 1 block that is for prep and can be for duties or coverage. The middle school teacher's schedule gives 2 periods off. One for a team plan and 1 for a personal prep. At the MS, teachers have 4 periods 56 minutes each to teach. Mr. Aho is separating the staff and building the middle school model again. During the last few years, the MS lost their team building activities. Mr. Aho will be scheduling a unifying event to build a sense of community, for example he mentioned Spirit Week and Homecoming.

Changing the schedule was discussed. Dr. Reese did not anticipate other issues when they initially changed the schedule and presented it to the community. According to Ms. Duquette, the sharing of staff created a problem. The need to build in a graduation requirement and having 150 credits to graduate was also mentioned.

The policy of posting a job position internally for 7 days before posting externally was mentioned. Waiting 7 days is a problem. Posting positions at the same time would be beneficial to the district.

Ms. Stanton Cross mentioned she would like to begin having uniforms starting at the MAC. Options were discussed for the next school year, however more time would be needed so this will come back up on the agenda for January 2020 for the entire MAC including Pre-K.

Other items discussed:

Clear expectations of students and faculty, make these explicit

Clearly know expected behaviors

Expectations of students and parents during Saturday school

Set a standard for the children

Place cameras outside the bathrooms, they can be moved over to the new school

Consistency/same language across all handbooks – use a template

Recess for grades 5-8

Wearing IDs

Clarity in policy for cell phones

Use of canine dogs

Changing the climate

Add tobacco use to the WES handbook

Grants - Dr. Reese would like to gather SC support, he is applying for 2 grants. One of the grants is from the Redesign Institute. There will be 2 days in November that will entail working on a problem of practice (the need to change the climate and culture). Nancy Tavares volunteered to assist Dr. Reese. Other stakeholders to get involved with the grant besides the SC will be staff, parent from the school council and a community member. The second grant is called "Portrait of a High School" by the Barr Foundation where Dr. Reese has met with Brockton to partner on working with culture and climate, the grant provides up to \$250,000.

IV. Adjourn – A motion was made to adjourn.

Motion by Pacheco, seconded by Stanton Cross

5/0/0

The School Committee Work Session adjourned at 7:37 pm.