

**WEBSTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
WEBSTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
OPEN SESSION MINUTES (M.G.L. C.39) OF Tuesday, October 22, 2024**

Date: October 22, 2024

Time: 6:00 PM

Location: School Committee Conference Room  
77 Poland Street, Webster, MA 01570

The meeting was called to order by: Chair Seddiki

The following Committee Members were present

- Member Millet
- Member Blythe
- Member Adamopoulos
- Member Sgariglia

The following Committee Members were absent:

**I. Call to Order: Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Seddiki stated as a reminder this meeting is being taped both audio and video and will be put on the district website

**II. Approval of October 08, 2024 Minutes**

**Motion: To Approve October 08, 2024 as presented**

The motion was made by: Member Blythe

The motion was seconded by: Member Millet

The following roll call vote was taken:

4 members having voted in the affirmative

\_ members having voted in the negative

\_ members having abstained

The motion: X Passed

\_ Failed

**1. Personnel Update: Superintendent Pierangeli**

**Retirements -**

Kathleen Baris - October 31, 2024

Superintendent Pierangeli thanked Ms. Baris for her years of service at Webster Public Schools. The Superintendent shared that she has had the pleasure of working with Ms. Baris for 12 years. Ms. Hair also thanked Ms. Baris for her dedication to the district and to our students here at Webster Public Schools. Dr. Mackay added that she has also had the opportunity to work with Ms. Baris and expressed how much she will be missed.

**New Hires -**

**Park Ave Elementary:**

Kaitlyn Mainville - ABA at Park Ave Elementary

Phil Legier - Paraprofessional at Webster Middle School

**Webster Middle School:**

No new hires at this time

**Bartlett High School:**

No new hires at this time

**Resignations -**

No resignations at this time.

**Transfers -**

No Transfers at this time.

**Vacant positions:**

SCHOOL	POSITION
PAE	ABA - 4.4 positions
PAE	Paraprofessionals - 2 position
WMS	Paraprofessionals - 2 positions
BHS	Paraprofessionals ( 4 positions )
District	School Psychologist

**2. Instructional Leadership Update**

Superintendent Pierangeli reported that the leadership team will be presenting on the MCAS release data. The Superintendent also reported that the instructional leadership team has begun conducting walkthroughs across the district. They are looking for trends and will share the data with schools on a monthly basis.

Dr. Mackay provided a report on the Massachusetts Accountability System, with details available in the packet. The Superintendent highlighted that this program has been highly beneficial to the district, as it can extract data from various sources and facilitates comparison of results with other districts. Superintendent Pierangeli also

presented key insights regarding the district's strengths and weaknesses, emphasizing that this remains a significant focus for the district.

Ms. Puliafico reported on some key factors of Park Ave Elementary Improvement Actions. Information included in the packet.

Ms. Peterson reported on some factors of Webster Middle School Improvement Actions. Information included in the packet.

Ms. Nieves reported on some key factors of Bartlett High School Improvement Actions. Information included in the packet.

Member Millet inquired about chronic absenteeism and requested that administrators share some of the initiatives being implemented to address this issue.

Ms. Puliafico offered insights on chronic absenteeism and discussed the current efforts to support families in promoting regular attendance for their children.

Ms. Peterson outlined the ongoing protocols established last year, including holding meetings, sending out letters, and filing reports with the Department of Children and Families as necessary. She also noted that she posts the attendance report on Class Dojo, which appears to be well-received by families.

Ms. Nieves reported on the ongoing implementation of last year's initiatives and highlighted their efforts to develop action plans in collaboration with students and parents. The goal is to identify the underlying reasons for absences and improve overall attendance.

Member Millet emphasized that student absenteeism is a concern at both the district and state levels. Member Millet noted the importance of effectively communicating the value of regular attendance to parents. Additionally, Member Millet suggested that it may be beneficial to engage with other districts to explore their strategies for addressing absenteeism.

Dr. Mackay highlighted that family engagement presents a valuable opportunity for the district to connect with students and families about chronic absenteeism and to discuss strategies for improving attendance.

Member Millet emphasized the need for a consistent approach to addressing chronic absenteeism across all schools.

The Superintendent noted that all three schools are addressing chronic absenteeism in a similar manner, with each school liaison actively reaching out to families to assist them in ensuring their children attend school.

Member Millet inquired whether classroom teachers are aware of the new strategies for addressing the issue of student absenteeism.

Member Blythe noted that just as students need to be in school to learn, teachers must also be present to teach. Member Blythe pointed out that absenteeism affects both students and teachers and asked whether the district emphasizes the importance of attendance to its staff.

Superintendent Pierangeli explained that the district emphasizes the importance of teachers being present in school on a daily basis and actively encourages their attendance.

Member Sgariglia shared insights from their experience as an educator regarding half days, highlighting the importance of fostering a positive culture to encourage student attendance during these times.

Chair Seddiki noted that the district has made notable gains in the data presented today. Chair Seddiki acknowledged that there can be gaps in understanding the significance of daily school attendance and encouraged ongoing communication with parents as a critical factor in student success.

Member Sgariglia inquired about the science curriculum used last year, noting the significant growth observed this year. Ms. Peterson responded that the curriculum was the STEM SCOPE curriculum.

### **3. Other updates**

The Superintendent reported on the Annual Report from Central Mass Collaborative - Per the regulations the district is required to share the annual report from Central Mass Collaborative.

Superintendent Pierangeli attended the library event titled 'Books, Bites, and Blooms. The Superintendent shared that it was a fantastic evening with strong attendance, emphasizing the importance of supporting our community partners.

The Superintendent shared that on Thursday afternoon she attended the unified basketball game at Oxford High School. Superintendent Pierangeli added that the partnership between Bartlett students and Oxford students to form a team is wonderful, and Webster Public Schools appreciates the teamwork that allows our students to represent their school.

Superintendent Pierangeli shared how recently the district was awarded the 21st century grant in the amount of \$12,500 for an afterschool program at Webster Middle School. Dr. Mackay reported that they have successfully recruited some students, with a start date scheduled for November 4, 2024.

The Superintendent reported that Dr. Mackay and her met on Friday with the new SSoS team to review how they will continue to support us in the upcoming school year. Superintendent Pierangeli added that they will be unpacking that meeting with the Leadership team as we get more information this week in an upcoming webinar with the Associate Commission.

Superintendent Pierangeli reported on Bartlett High School's graduation date for June 5th, 2025.

## **B. Business Manager Report - Ms. Kontoes**

### **1- Building Committee Update -**

Ms. Kontoes shared a presentation, which is included in the packet.

Ms. Kontoes shared some pictures and information, explaining that the project is progressing well and remains on schedule with Phase 2.

## **2- Maintenance Update -**

District Office - The thermostat system had a shorted or failed temperature thermistors. New sensors were ordered and the repair was made. Sensors were under warranty. They have been repaired and up and running.

Member Millet asked whether additional portable classrooms would be needed. Ms. Kontoes reported that no additional portable classrooms will be necessary.

## **C. Principal Report - Ms. Heidi Peterson, Principal at Webster Middle School -**

A. Fundraising Updates - Ms. Peterson reported on the recent calendar raffle, which featured daily prizes. Ms. Peterson noted that 26 businesses contributed to the raffle, resulting in a total of \$8,580 raised, which will be allocated directly to field trips.

Ms. Peterson announced that the next fundraiser will take place this Thursday. The event will feature a 'Teacher Under the Mask' performance, and concessions will be available for purchase.

B. Gentex Eyeglass Repair - Ms. Peterson reported that next Tuesday, representatives will be available to provide glasses repair services and to discuss a program for obtaining new glasses.

C. Safety Quest -Ms. Peterson reported that representatives from Mapfre will be visiting on November 5, 2024. Ms. Peterson noted that this visit is typically well-received by both students and staff.

D. Veterans Day Ceremony- Ms. Peterson reported that the continuation of the Veterans Day Celebration will take place on Thursday, November 7, 2024, at 1:00 PM.

E. Attendance Update - Ms. Peterson reported that the year-to-date attendance percentage is 94%. However, there are still significant challenges with chronic absenteeism, as 112 students are classified as chronically absent. She noted that there were three days when the absentee percentage exceeded 96%. On half days, attendance has fallen below 90%. Ms. Peterson also shared that a family survey was conducted to understand the reasons for low attendance on half days. The survey results indicated that parents perceived these days as not academically productive and felt that attending school was a waste of time.

Member Millet expressed gratitude to Ms. Peterson for continuing the tradition of the Veterans Day Celebration. Member Sgariglia inquired about the motivational speaker's performance. Ms. Peterson responded that the speaker was very effective and the students really enjoyed it.

## **IV. Student Representative Update - Hope Cooper**

The Student Representative, Hope Cooper, reported on the following updates:

- Sophomores are selling pies until October 21, 2024
- Cheerleaders Fill My Bow Fundraiser
- Winter Sports Sign-Up Released

- First Nichols Leadership Field Trip on October 24, 2024
- National Honor Society invitations have been sent out; acceptance letters will be sent soon
- Soccer Senior Night on October 16, 2024
- Unified Basketball Game on October 17, 2024
- Haunted Hallways on October 20, 2024

The Superintendent remarked that the Haunted Hallways were quite scary and shared additional positive feedback about other events.

## **V. Old Business**

- A. Policy ACA - Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex - Final Reading and Approval
- B. Policy ACAB- Sexual and Sex-Based Harassment and Retaliation - Final Reading and Approval
- C. Policy ACA-R Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex under Title IX Including Sex-Based Harassment - Final Reading and Approval
- D. Policy ACGA - Civil Rights Grievance Procedure - Final Reading and Approval
- E. Policy ACGB - Title IX Sexual Discrimination Grievance Procedure - Final Reading and Approval

There was no feedback or questions on the five policies

### **Motion: To Approve the Final Reading of Policy ACA- Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex**

The motion was made by: Member Blythe

The motion was seconded by: Member Millet

The following roll call vote was taken:

5 members having voted in the affirmative

\_ members having voted in the negative

\_ members having abstained

The motion: X Passed

\_ Failed

### **Motion: To Approve the Final Reading of Policy ACAB - Sexual and Sex-Based Harassment and Retaliation**

The motion was made by: Member Blythe

The motion was seconded by: Member Millet

The following roll call vote was taken:

5 members having voted in the affirmative

\_ members having voted in the negative

\_ members having abstained

The motion: X Passed

\_ Failed

### **Motion: To Approve the Final Reading of the Policy ACA-R- Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex under Title IX Including Sex-Based Harassment**

The motion was made by: Member Blythe

The motion was seconded by: Member Millet

The following roll call vote was taken:

5 members having voted in the affirmative

\_ members having voted in the negative

\_ members having abstained

The motion: X Passed

\_ Failed

**Motion: To Approve the Final Reading of the Policy ACGA - Civil Rights Grievance Procedure**

The motion was made by: Member Blythe

The motion was seconded by: Member Millet

The following roll call vote was taken:

5 members having voted in the affirmative

\_ members having voted in the negative

\_ members having abstained

The motion: X Passed

\_ Failed

**Motion: To Approve the Final Reading of Policy ACGB - Title IX Sexual Discrimination Grievance Procedure**

The motion was made by: Member Blythe

The motion was seconded by: Member Millet

The following roll call vote was taken:

5 members having voted in the affirmative

\_ members having voted in the negative

\_ members having abstained

The motion: X Passed

\_ Failed

**VI. New Business**

A. Discussion of Food Service Summer and Finance Report

Ms. Sanders provided an overview of the food service program for the past fiscal year, highlighting a positive financial outcome. She reported a 13.4% increase in revenue compared to fiscal year 2023. A key contributor to this growth was a notable rise in federal reimbursements, which now account for 80% of the total revenue.

Ms. Sanders explained that the increase in student participation has led to higher reimbursements from both state and federal sources. Specifically, there was a significant increase in the number of meals served during the 2022-2023 fiscal year, with approximately 5,963 more lunches and 34,683 more breakfasts served

compared to the previous year. Ms. Sanders expressed pride in these achievements, emphasizing the positive impact of increased student participation.

She also highlighted the success of efforts to reduce food waste and ensure that students are being served meals that align with both their preferences and the nutritional guidelines set by state and federal funding sources.

However, Ms. Sanders noted that food costs have risen due to a shift toward sourcing more local foods, fresh produce, and scratch-cooked meals, all of which have contributed to higher overall expenses.

Ms. Sanders also reported on the success of the summer meal program, noting that it was an overwhelming success. Free meals were provided to the youth in our community, with a total of 5,886 meals served, including enrolled summer students. Ms. Sanders highlighted the kickoff event at the town library, which Ms. Sander's described as a major success. Ms. Sanders concluded by expressing her satisfaction with the program's outcomes and her anticipation for next year's summer initiative.

Chair Seddiki praised the significant growth in breakfast participation for the school year, noting an increase of approximately 180 additional breakfasts served daily, along with 30 more lunches. Chair Seddiki expressed enthusiasm over this achievement, emphasizing its positive impact.

Member Millet commended Ms. Sanders for her exceptional work and inquired whether the meal sampling program would continue. Ms. Sanders confirmed that it would, continuing throughout the year.

The Superintendent congratulated Ms. Sanders for her outstanding work in food service, recognizing her efforts in driving success for the program.

Ms. Kontoes also expressed her gratitude, offering a heartfelt thank you to Ms. Sanders and the entire food service team for their dedication and commitment.

#### B. Approval of the Initial Capital Improvement Plan

Ms. Kontoes reported on the Initial Improvement Plan - Ms. Kontoes provided an update on the Initial Improvement Plan, explaining that the town typically follows a five-year Capital Improvement Plan, which is historically due by late February each year. However, this year the town accountant has requested that an initial version of the plan be submitted by the end of October. Relevant items have been included in the packet for review.

Chair Seddiki inquired about the timeline for prioritizing the items. Ms. Kontoes responded that the expectation is to submit the final list by the end of February. Ms. Kontoes added that she hopes to present the list to the School Committee by the end of January.

#### C. New Athletic League - Central Mass Athletic Conference (CMAC)

Mr. Paranto explained the Southern Worcester County League (SWCL) is disbanding and teams will be joining the Central Mass Athletic Conference. This change will make it more equitable in competition for small schools teams in Central Mass. This will take effect in the 2025-2026 School Year.

#### D. Approval of .5 Nurse Assistant - Webster Middle School and Bartlett High School



Superintendent Pierangeli reported on the challenges of securing substitute teachers, noting that this issue continues to be a significant concern. To address the immediate need, funding for substitutes will be sourced from salary savings due to unfilled positions.

Chair Seddiki asked whether this funding will cover the position for the current year and inquired about the long-term plan. Superintendent Pierangeli explained that if the need for this position persists, it will be incorporated into the budget for the following fiscal year.

Member Sgariglia inquired about the qualifications required for a school nurse. Superintendent Pierangeli responded that the position requires the nurse to be either a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) or a Registered Nurse (RN).

**Motion: To Approve of .5 Nurse Assistant - Webster Middle School and Bartlett High School**

The motion was made by: Member Blythe

The motion was seconded by: Member Millet

The following roll call vote was taken:

5 members having voted in the affirmative

\_ members having voted in the negative

\_ members having abstained

The motion: X Passed

\_ Failed

E. Approval of 4.0 FTE additional ABA - 1.0 at Bartlett High School  
- 3.0 at Park Ave Elementary

Ms. Baris reported that the request is based on a thorough analysis of current assignments and an assessment of the needs of all students requiring ABA support as outlined in their IEPs, including both new enrollees and returning students. In collaboration with the administration at Park Avenue Elementary and Bartlett High School, it has been determined that these positions are essential to ensure compliance with students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Ms. Baris added that the funding will be coming from the physical year 2024 Grant.

Member Sgariglia inquired about how students are being supported until these positions are filled. Ms. Baris explained that this has been a challenge. When available, substitute paraprofessionals are used to fill the positions. In some cases, students are paired with other students and teachers to ensure their needs are met.

**Motion: To Approve of 4.0 FTE additional ABA positions**

The motion was made by: Member Blythe

The motion was seconded by: Member Millet

The following roll call vote was taken:

5 members having voted in the affirmative

\_ members having voted in the negative

\_ members having abstained

The motion:   X Passed  
                  \_ Failed

F. Approval of 1 additional 1.0 FTE Instructional Assistant at Park Ave Elementary

Ms. Baris reported that there is a need for an Instructional Assistant to provide one-on-one support for a student at Park Avenue Elementary.

**Motion: To Approve of 1.0 FTE additional Paraprofessional position**

The motion was made by: Member Blythe  
The motion was seconded by: Member Millet  
The following roll call vote was taken:  
      5 members having voted in the affirmative  
      \_ members having voted in the negative  
      \_ members having abstained  
The motion:   X Passed  
                  \_ Failed

Ms. Seddicki thanked Ms. Baris for her dedication to Webster Public Schools and wishes all the best in this new chapter.

**VI. Review / Transfer / signing of Warrants, Bills, Payroll and Vouchers**

A. Signing of Warrant in the amount of \$290,507.78

**VII. Adjournment**

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 8:09 PM  
The motion was made by: Member Blythe  
The motion was seconded by: Member Millet  
The following roll call vote was taken:  
      5 members having voted in the affirmative  
      \_ members having voted in the negative  
      \_ members having abstained  
The motion:   X Passed  
                  \_ Failed

Respectfully submitted,  
Desiree A. Moniz

**Documents included in the packet:**

- October 08,2024 Minutes
- Superintendent Notes
- Annual Report 2023-2024 Presentation
- BHS Renovation Project Presentation
- Capital Improvement Plan Presentation
- Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex Policy
- Sexual & Sex-Based Harassment and Retaliation Policy
- Nondiscrimination of the Basis of Sex under Title IX Policy
- Civil Rights Grievance Procedure Policy
- Title IX Sexual Discrimination Grievance Procedure Policy
- Warrant Report

**Upcoming Events / Dates:**

<b>October 12, 2024</b>	<b>Homecoming Dance</b>	<b>BHS</b>	<b>6:30 PM to 9:00 PM</b>
<b>October 14, 2024</b>	<b>Holiday</b>	<b>All Schools</b>	<b>Closed</b>
<b>October 17, 2024</b>	<b>BHS Basketball Game</b>	<b>Oxford Gym</b>	<b>4:00 PM</b>
<b>October 19, 2024</b>	<b>TBD</b>	<b>WMS</b>	<b>WMS Chorus - Worc Railers</b>
<b>October 20,2024</b>	<b>PBIS Community Trunk or Treat</b>	<b>BHS</b>	<b>WMS Parking Lot 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM</b>
<b>October 22, 2024</b>	<b>6:00 PM</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>School Committee Meeting</b>
<b>October 24, 2024</b>	<b>Nichols Leadership Academy Field Trip</b>	<b>BHS</b>	<b>Nichols College 9:30 AM to 1:30 PM</b>
<b>October 24, 2024</b>	<b>Masked the Teacher</b>	<b>WMS</b>	<b>6:00 PM to 8:00 PM</b>
<b>October 30, 2024</b>	<b>National Honor Society Induction</b>	<b>BHS</b>	<b>Cafeteria 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM</b>
<b>November 7, 2024</b>	<b>BHS Basketball Game</b>	<b>Oxford Gym</b>	<b>4:00 PM</b>