



Weymouth

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Weymouth School Committee

[ZOOM Meeting](#)

October 8, 2020

MEETING MINUTES

(approved 10/22/20)

Members In Attendance: Lisa Belmarsh, Chair; Tracey Nardone, Vice-Chair; John Sullivan, Secretary; Kathy Curran; Rebecca Sherlock-Shangraw; Carrie Palazzo

Members Absent: Mayor Robert Hedlund

Also Present: Jennifer Curtis-Whipple, Superintendent; Brian Smith, Assistant Superintendent; Robert Wargo, Assistant Superintendent.

The Meeting Came to Order At 7:02pm.

Mrs. Nardone led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consent Agenda:

The consent agenda included:

- Warrant 15-2021 in the amount of \$1,738,417.49 Dated October 13, 2020
- Regular Minutes 9/17/20, 10/1/20

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to accept the consent agenda. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll Call vote. Passed unanimously.

Public Comment

The Chair opened public comment reminding that comments be kept to 3 minutes and topics of the agenda.

-Matt Cherner, 64 Lynchick Dr.

As a dad of 3 and middle school teacher in another district expressed his feelings of the positive collaboration he has experienced in his teaching district which has been hybrid for 4 weeks. Mr.

Cherner referenced a letter and Facebook posts of Dr. Murphy, WEA (Weymouth Educators Association) president and shared his personal opinion that Mr. Murphy is unwilling to negotiate and is scaring teachers out of returning to the building and should step down as president. Mr. Cherner urged collaboration, conveying that teaching now is challenging and hard however worth it. He supports returning to hybrid learning.

-Caitlyn McGinnis, 20 Neck Street

Expressed her thanks to the primary principals for the videos they recorded of how things will look when students are back in the building and also for the thoughtful and diligent return to school plan.

-Josephine Burke, 265 Broad Street

As a 10th grader at WHS voiced her concern of not returning to school sooner and expressed her personal opinion that she is not learning anything new remotely; supporting hybrid learning as quickly as possible. Ms. Burke also commented on mask wearing and that some don't follow protocols and pointed out the difficulty for elementary students to remain socially distant. She thanked the committee for listening.

-Arthur Burke, 265 Broad Street

Expressed his opinion that Weymouth is falling behind and that students should be back in the building as soon as possible. Mr. Burke advised that he's reached out many times regarding the curriculum not teaching students anything new.

Report of the Superintendent

The Superintendent reported on the following:

Primary and Pre School open houses were hosted over the past week and were well attended. Dr. Curtis-Whipple thanked all of those who attended and staff for being innovative. Due to the weather and power outages, Principal Meehan will be reaching out to families.

Author Jerry Crafft visited Abigail Adams and spoke of his life, writing style and his book. Superintendent Curtis-Whipple thanked Ms. McCue Day for organizing the event.

Dr. Curtis-Whipple relayed what Principal Perez wrote about the sub separate students being in school for 3 weeks epitomizing positivity. Students are learning with their masks on for mixed delivery teaching. Some teachers have collected social stories to support the next wave of students starting on Tuesday to support hybrid style learning.

At WHS Mr. Cole organized the National Honor Society induction ceremony where 41 students were inducted. Dr. Curtis Whipple thanked Mr. Cole.

The Superintendent stated she is looking forward to students coming back.

New Business

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to take John MacLeod out of order. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously

Adams Renovation and Transportation Building Update

Mr. MacLeod advised that the modulars are completed and operating as intended at Academy, Ralph Talbot, and Murphy schools. An overview was given of the work that maintenance and custodial staff has completed at Abigail Adams: library carpet replacement, auditorium lecture space and chair replacement, and acoustical ceiling tiles. Mr. MacLeod recognized and thanked the maintenance and custodial staff.

HVAC systems have been surveyed. Installment of needlepoint ionization will begin next week.

There was a delay in the transportation building engineering. CDR Maguire was not able to continue and Mr. MacLeod was able to secure Beta Engineering to get the project back on track.

MSBA (Massachusetts School Building Authority) approved the feasibility study done for the boiler project at Ralph Talbot.

Funding agreed by Town Council and by School Committee vote.

Assistant Superintendent Smith Also thanked the maintenance and custodial staff for all of their work at Adams in addition to the close of Chapman and all of the extra work related to Covid.

Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw confirmed that the bonded money is still earmarked for building.

Chair Belmarsh inquired about next steps for Adams. Mr. MacLeod summarized the 3 phases: the Academy entrance, ramp and parking; the Kindergarten wing buildout (4 classrooms with bathrooms); core bathroom adaptation and fixture update. Due to MGL 149 the project requires an engineer and a request for bid would happen in the winter for work to start in the spring. Phases will be staggered to identify funding sources. The Chair reminded that Adams will close for the 2022-23 school year for work; the same year that Chapman will open.

There will be a more comprehensive presentation at the November meeting.

The transportation building is currently in conceptual design, then schematics and site work. Assistant Superintendent Smith recognized and thanked SEIU and transportation staff, especially Robin Howard, Regina Callahan, and Laurie Drew.

a. Return to School Plan and discuss potential return to school and district readiness dates

Superintendent Curtis-Whipple advised that the metrics are a fluid and adaptable tool and emphasized that decisions are data driven. The advisory group is composed of school and town department employees, DPH, and includes Councilor Haugh. The group meets on Thursdays.

Assistant Superintendent Smith gave an overview of the community spread, WPS resources, and state and local health metrics. Community spread and the school community is in the yellow.

Dennis Jones and Myra Jones updated the metrics on the website.

Interim Health Director Elaine Laine advised that 2 WHS students were tested as Covid positive in 2 different classrooms. Immediate action was taken in closing and sanitizing the classrooms as well as the medical waiting room. Contact tracing protocols were followed and some staff were asked to quarantine. Nursing staff is working over the weekend. School messenger was sent out appropriately and privacy/confidentiality was abided. Ms. Lane commented on how fantastic the custodial and nursing staff has been in going above and beyond along with the department of health (Julie & Cindy). It was reiterated that contacts be listed where they can get to the school w/in 30 minutes and that contacts who are at risk should not be listed. Hand washing, mask wearing and social distancing was reiterated.

Superintendent Curtis-Whipple and Chair Belmarsh echoes how wonderful the custodial and nursing staff has been, especially Elaine Lane and Ashley Hulme. It was emphasized that community cases don't necessarily impact the school and the metrics are being closely monitored.

Human Resources Director Maryann Foley gave a staffing update which is a snapshot in time. 52 employees have taken advantage of FFCRA, 26 FMLA, and 37 have received accommodations. There are approximately 1200 staff members. Unit A encompassed teaching staff and Unit D consists of Educational Support Professionals.

It was commented that with returning to hybrid earlier that there may be more leaves of absence. The district pays for FFCRA with hopes of reimbursement. The Superintendent explained that the district is keeping a close eye on the budget however still has to pay for coverage of leaves. The committee recognized the volume of work and thanked HR Director Foley for her hard work. Ms. Foley thanked her staff Sue Faiella and Beth Long for going above and beyond.

Assistant Superintendent Smith gave a summary of leave coverage and additional staff and the financial impact. Some ESPs are being utilized with transportation; the district is still in need of 13 bus monitors. Stacey Ware is working with remote learning staff (22). Depending on the type of leave depends on the substitute needed; daily sub, building sub, and long term substitute. Potential cost for subs is \$2.5M, \$1.5M over the budgeted \$1M.

An overview of the direct to school department grants was given. The total currently stands at ~\$2.4M. Total money expended to date is \$2,265,839. Assistant Superintendent thanked Alyssa Bosse' for tracking and working with Chief of Staff Langil.

Chair Belmarsh confirmed that the potential sub reimbursement is not yet included in the grant reimbursement.

Assistant Superintendent Wargo gave an overview of the the return to school timeline which began with the working groups and emphasized that plans are not one size fits all. Curriculum worked quickly on strategies to assist staff with hybrid learning as well as tech integration visiting buildings. Agendas during PD days were altered due to a result of staff feedback. Mr. Wargo shared the definition of 'toxic positivity' and stressed that his 'can do' attitude in no way was meant to invalidate the feelings of educators and shared his pride for how dedicated they are.

Mrs. Curran shared her appreciation for Mr. Wargo's enthusiasm, stating that the plan presented August 6 was different from the original plan on August 4. Teri Marculitis and Teri Fleming gave examples of hybrid strategies; Alternate A/B Synchronous and Asynchronous, Virtual/Individual Rotations, Teaching to both, Teach to Build. Overlapping of strategies is a possibility as well. Videos were shared of WPS school staff. Holly McKay's video was highlighted at the Johnson School and ELA and Math at the 5th grade level at Seach school. Ms. Fleming stressed flexibility and understanding. Sample templates of the day were mentioned.

Asynchronous work will be done after lunch on Monday afternoons. These afternoons will allow staff to collaborate. Mr. Wargo emphasized the administration's trust in the Weymouth educators and advised that guidance, support and strategies will be provided however teachers will not be told how to teach hybrid. Teachers are being creative while being mindful of social distancing. Promethean Boards will also be used.

Mrs. Curran mentioned that the OWL camera may be helpful for teachers at the Johnson level.

Dennis Jones, Social Emotional Assistant Curriculum Director and Brynn Cooper, School Psychologist gave an overview of supports and services available to families. The Curriculum team which also includes Remi Sullivan and Lindsey Jacobs started planning in the spring for coaching, materials, training and collaboration. A family resource directory is available to families. The impacts of Covid on families is far reaching. There will be monthly virtual resource fairs; the first will be held October 15 at 6:30 and the topic will be suicide prevention.

<https://wpsupdates.weymouthps.org/>

Assistant Superintendent Smith gave an update on transportation and urged all parents and guardians to wear their masks when bringing students to and from the bus/van. Many districts are experiencing difficulty in filling bus/van drivers and monitor positions. Some payrider seats

may be available as some families have opted to drive their students. Robin Howard has been working closely with First Student in maintaining the same standards and following safety and sanitizing procedures.

An outline of hybrid dates was given.

OVERVIEW OF DATES				
<u>Previous Dates</u>				
<u>Hybrid Phases</u>				
Students	Hybrid Phase 1	Hybrid Phase 2	Hybrid Phase 3	Hybrid Phase 4
Grades 12 Career and Technical Education: Tues-Fri	Sept 22, 2020			
High Needs Substantially Separate Programs: Tues-Fri	Sept 22, 2020			
Johnson Early Childcare Center: Mon-Fri		Oct 13, 2020		
Primary Schools (K,1,2) 2 days - Tues,Wed / Thurs,Fri		Oct 13, 2020		
ELL Levels 1 & 2 (Grades K,1,2): 4 days,Tues-Fri		Oct 13, 2020		
Primary Schools (3,4,5) 2 days - Tues,Wed / Thurs,Fri			Target Date: 11/4/20	
ELL Levels 1 & 2 (Grades 3,4,5): 4 days, Tues-Fri			Target Date: 11/4/20	
Abigail Adams Middle School (6-7) 1 Day / Week			Target Date: 11/4/20	
ELL Levels 1 & 2 (Grades 6,7) 2 days - Tues,Wed / Thurs,Fri			Target Date: 11/4/20	
Weymouth High School (8-12)				TBD based on Metrics
Weymouth Evening High School				TBD based on Metrics

Dr. Curtis-Whipple thanked families for offering to drive their students so that some families who don't have the option will be able to use payrider. The Superintendent also shared that she was in receipt of a letter from the WEA president written on behalf of the membership requesting not to move up hybrid dates. Superintendent Curtis-Whipple advised that the letter does not change the start of Tuesday October 13 for the first round of K-2 cohorts and expressed her recognition and appreciation for safety concerns and anxiety felt and also for the difficulty of teaching hybrid classes but conveyed her faith in the Weymouth educators. The district is adhering to the MOU agreement.

Mrs. Curran shared her support for students returning back as soon as possible and inquired if Mr. Cherner was referencing the letter from Mike Murphy that she received at 5pm this evening. She reiterated the balanced risk in returning and reminded that vulnerable teachers are able to take advantage of the FFCRA.

Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw advised that in addition to transportation and staffing, metrics (data) drives the recommendation to move forward with phases and asked for the community's help in

getting the community spread back into the green. Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw commented on the number of communications that the school committee has received in not having students back in the building. She emphasized that the district is exercising caution to keep students and staff safe with the thoughtful return to school plan.

Ms. Palazzo commented that a sample daily schedule might help address family concerns and expressed that there may be some concern over tardiness for families that are dropping off at the same time as logging in remotely. The Superintendent urges families to have open conversation with building principals and teachers regarding schedule templates and transportation. Building principals had recorded videos over the summer to help with returning to the building (hallways, lining up, etc) and emphasized positivity, patience, working together, keeping an open mind and learning from mistakes.

Mrs. Nardone agreed that a more detailed schedule may be helpful for families and also urged the community and families to do their part to ensure that the spread goes back into the green. Mrs. Nardone highlighted Ms. McKay's video and her creativity.

Dr. Sullivan as father, school committee member and teacher expressed his support in sending his daughter for the hybrid phase sharing his hopes that it could be more than 1 day a week. He conveyed his confidence in the Superintendent and the return to school plan and all safety measures taken. Dr. Sullivan commented on the amount of PD the Weymouth educators have received and expressed his appreciation for the flexibility of dates and to Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw for the comprehensive rubric for the metrics.

Chair Belmarsh thanked the public for commenting via email, calls and public comment and emphasized that the decisions/recommendations are driven by the data to support students returning safely in small cohorts.

Superintendent Curtis-Whipple advised that the waiving of student parking fees at the high school is being considered.

Proposed calendar changes are to replace the professional development day on November 10 with a student school day and the professional development day of December 8 be moved to December 7.

The Committee thanked all of the presenters for the comprehensive presentation.

b. Report of the Policy Sub-Committee: 10/5/20 (action requested)

The committee (Tracey Nardone, Carrie Palazzo, Kathy Curran, Assistant Superintendent Wargo) along with Jim Hardy from MASC (Massachusetts Association of School Committee) met on 10/5/20 and discussed policy JJJA regarding extra curricular eligibility for Weymouth students attending private schools. The policy conflicts with MIAA rule 52. The policy will be pulled and

replaced. Adopting the manual was also discussed. The committee is trying to meet again soon. The meeting adjourned at 6:37pm

c. Budget Sub-Committee Update: Current statuses of COVID related grant funding

Dr. Sullivan stated that the close oversight of the grants and the tracking and checks and balance is impressive. The vendor website denotes when money is disbursed with a slight lag. There hasn't been disbursement of the supplemental grant yet however Senator O'Connor's office is aware. Assistant Superintendent Smith expressed his thanks to John Barker, John MacLeod and James Malary for the great working relationship and also to HR Director Foley and Alyssa Bosse for their hard work with the End Of Year report due October 16, 2020.

d. Approval of transfer funds from SPED Collaborative Tuition (202) to District Wide IT (045) for Technology Lease payment not funded by Capital Budget (action requested)

Assistant Superintendent Smith advised that this is the 2nd of 2 transfers to fund the chromebooks for FY21. Due to Covid savings (transportation and utilities) Out of District tuitions were able to be prepaid (Section 71D). Mr. Smith emphasized the Special Education Budget is not being reduced.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to approve the transfer of funds from SPED Collaborative Tuition (202) to District Wide IT (045) for Technology Lease payment not funded by Capital Budget. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

Mrs. Curran confirmed the amount of \$505,357.17.

e. Vote for MASC Delegate at MASC Conference (action requested)

Motion by Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw for Tracey Nardone be the delegate for the MASC Conference. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

f. Review Superintendent Evaluation Requirements

The Chair asked the Superintendent and the committee to identify goals and indicators. The evaluation period for experienced Superintendents (Dr. Curtis-Whipple) is 2 years. It was requested to be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

Old Business

a. Chapman School Building Update

Footings and foundations have been poured. The next School Building Committee meeting is scheduled for October 20. Steel is scheduled to arrive in November.

b. Review Return to School Plan and additional potential amendments for return school dates

i. Grades 3-5 Possible 2 day return Nov 4 by cohort

ii. Grades 6-7 Possible 1 day return Nov 4 by cohort

iii. Grades 8-12, CTE and Post-Grad reviewing next steps

Covered in the return to school plan under new business above.

Announcements:

Town Wide Parent Council-October 13-7pm, Consult Facebook page for ZOOM details.

Budget Sub Committee-October 14, 6pm

TownWeymouth Market-November 4, 2020-NEW time-3:30pm-WHS Gold Cafeteria in a drive thru manner

Next School Committee Meeting:

Regular Meeting: Thursday, October 22, 2020 - 7:00pm

The Meeting adjourned at 10:08pm on the motion of Mrs. Nardone, seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote - passed unanimously.

Documents Attached to These Minutes:

- Return to School Update

Respectfully Submitted,

John Sullivan
Secretary