Westport School Committee
Regular Meeting
DATE: March 9, 2026
TIME: 6:30 p.m.
PLACE: WMHS – Auditorium

MINUTES

Members Present: Evan Gendreau, Fred Melnyk, Jason Pacheco, Caitlin Sampers, Christopher Thrasher
Also Present: Laura Charette Westport Middle High School Principal, Stacey Duquette Macomber Principal, Holly Hargraves Director of Curriculum and Professional Development, Ryan Keane Student Representative *(left at 6:41 pm.),* Kristin McDaniel Human Resources Director, Lori Melo Executive Secretary, Wendy Miranda Special Education Director, Kerrie Moreau SEPAC, Robin Morin Westport Elementary Assistant Principal, Kim Ouellette Administrative Assistant for Maintenance, Paul Poulin District Maintenance Director, Michelle Rapoza School Business Manager, Francine Roy Superintendent, Nancy Tavares Special Education Assistant Director, 8 Community Participants

I. Call to Order - Chair Christopher Thrasher opened up the Westport School Committee Regular Meeting at 6:35 pm. with a quorum of the members present.

II. Comments and Statements from the Public - There were none.

IV. Informational Agenda - *(taken out of order)*
a. Student Representatives –
Ryan Keane reported the following on the middle school - Half day March 11, grades due tomorrow, sign-ups for Math Summer Camp for grades 2-6 are taking place, LEAP Leadership and Educational Advancement Program applications due March 13, congratulations to the winners of the pop giveaway, MCAS is April 1 and April 2.

Ryan Keane reported the following on the high school - Term 3 progress reports will be posted March 13, Senior dinner for Class of 2026 will be March 20, everyone is eagerly awaiting for the Japanese exchange students who will be presenting to the Westport students March 24, Black and White Dance will be March 27 in celebration of the exchange students, MCAS English Language Arts for Grade 10 takes place March 24 and 25, Krispy Kreme Fundraiser is through March 31, Paint Night for sophomores is March 12, Westport High School Student Council, Advocats, and RISE Raising Individual Student's Expectations is sponsoring the 3rd Annual Jaden Araujo Memorial Scholarship Fund Bowling Fundraiser April 12, High School Drama Club will perform Hadestown May 8,9, and 10, Westport High School Medical Club will be holding a blood drive March 28, Spring sports registration ends March 12, Baseball, Softball, Lacrosse, Boys and Girls Tennis are offered to grades 8-12, Baseball and Softball for grades 5-8, tryouts start March 16, game scores were announced for varsity boys and girls basketball teams, updates were given for Co-op Ice Hockey, Co-op Wrestling, Co-op Swimming and Dive teams, congratulations were given to various students for their athletic achievements.
(Ryan Keane left here at 6:41 pm.)

Return to regular agenda:

III. Special Agenda – FY27 Education Budget Public Hearing

a. Proposed FY27 School Committee Education Budget - Chair Thrasher announced the Public Hearing for the budget presentation is tonight.

Chair Thrasher officially declared the FY27 Education Budget Public Hearing open at 6:42 p.m.

b. General Discussion of FY27 Proposed Budget - Ms. Rapoza explained the School Department presented this budget to the Finance Committee on Feb 3, 2026.

Mr. Gendreau commented that the overall increase is $1.2 million dollars. Vast majority is primarily contractual increases with collective bargaining, supply costs, and Special Education. Town's free cash number is not finalized, revenue estimates were amended, and the total budget number is not finalized for either the school or town side at this time.

Chair Thrasher added service delivery is a net number.

Chair Thrasher asked if there were any comments or questions from the committee? There were none.

Chair Thrasher officially declared the FY27 Education Budget Public Hearing closed at 6:52 p.m.

IV. Informational Agenda

a. Student Representatives – Done above.

b. Superintendent Report – Dr. Roy thanked facilities staff for getting the schools through the blizzard, everything was cleared at the time to return to school. In addition, appreciation was given for the communication and cooperation between the schools and the Highway, Police and Fire Departments.

The traffic situation in front of the middle high school on Old County Rd. has gained recent attention. There was an audit done on this problem. Dr. Roy reminded everyone school doors open at 6:45 a.m. and students can be dropped off. Carpooling and riding the bus is encouraged. Everyone take extra precautions at arrival and dismissal times.

A thanks went out for the partnership between the Westport River Watershed Alliance and Westport Middle High School Environmental Club. Students designed and led activities. This was a great example of experiential learning with science and environmental education.

Shout out to National Unified Banner Recognition Program. This honor reflects dedication to inclusion and unity. Only 17 school received this recognition.

Congratulations to Principal Robin Morin who was accepted to the DESE Department of Elementary and Secondary Education sponsored Inclusive Leadership Academy.

The unified middle school basketball game with police and fire departments showcases the power of community.

Chair Thrasher asked if there was anything further? Nothing at this time.

c. Business Manager Report - Ms. Rapoza shared there was nothing further to report on besides the budget.

d. Curriculum Director Report – Ms. Hargraves reported they applied for and have been selected to receive $12,000 to support civic engagement and our democracy which is an 8th grade democratic knowledge program. Funds will be for Professional Development and implementation support.

Vacation Math Camp - Westport Education Foundation will support this program for grades 2 - 6 during the April break with Math and STEM Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics activities.

Financial literacy efforts have students enrolled with Westport Federal Credit Union's program. Enrollment is ongoing.

Credit for Life Fair will take place at the high school in June, teaching students real life money management skills. Grants to sponsor this fair have been received.

ICP Innovation Career Pathways team is bringing vision for this idea. There are 10 students enrolled with 9 pending. They are seeking partnerships and visited Bourne High School about their program.

Instructional Leadership Team reviewed curriculum materials. There is paperwork in member's packets on what they are doing.

Ms. Hargraves asked if there were questions? There were none.

e. SEPAC Presentation – Ms. Moreau reported for the SEPAC Special Education Parent Advisor Council outlining areas they focus on that include awarding two $500 Missy DaSilva memorial scholarships, provide grants to teachers for innovative projects, sponsor family engagement nights, fund staff appreciation lemonade stand, and increase awareness. In addition, they participated in the Banner Event and updated their bylaws. They remain present and visible to all staff. Their mission is to support families dealing with diverse learning needs.

Committee members thanked SEPAC for their continued work.

f. Committee Liaison Reports - Mr. Melnyk and Ms. Sampers had nothing new to report.

Mr. Pacheco reported the Policy Subcommittee met on February 5, 2026 and nothing new from the Cable Advisory Board with next meeting scheduled for April 8, 2026.

Mr. Gendreau reported the Audit Committee will have a meeting on March 30, 2026.

Chair Thrasher had nothing new to add.

g. WCS Bill Warrant: 3/6/2026, 2/20/26, 2/6/26, 1/23/26 -

Chair Thrasher verified that each member received an electronic copy for review of the bill warrants dated 3/6/2026 for a total of $165,816.72, 2/20/26 for a total of $471,565.00, 2/6/26 for a total of $224,489.24, 1/23/26 for a total of $425,793.26.

Chair Thrasher asked if there were any questions? There were none.

Chair Thrasher confirmed the bill warrants acknowledged.

h. Student and Staff Attendance Reports - Chair Thrasher mentioned these reports are included in the committee's packets.

Chair Thrasher asked if there were any comments or questions?

Ms. Sampers mentioned absences as a concern.

i. School Council Reports – S. Duquette, R. Morin, L. Charette

Macomber - Ms. Duquette began by explaining the purpose of their School Council is to serve as a constant for parents to voice opinions, clarify items, routines, programming and school initiatives. They are now a total of 7 consisting of 4 parent reps, 1 community rep, 1 teacher rep and herself. They are always accepting more members. They meet bimonthly and met 4 times this year. Topics covered include School Improvement Plan, goals, literacy, family engagement, RTI Response To Intervention process, community resources and opportunities, school climate and morale for students and staff, Spirit Days, focus on proposed playground, safety, transition of kindergarteners and family support.

Ms. Duquette asked if there were any questions? There were none.

Westport Elementary School - Ms. Morin reported due to the blizzard their first School Council meeting has been re-scheduled to Tuesday March 24. Meeting agenda highlights are strategic growth plan, recent DESE school report, targeted action plan, staffing and budget, open positions, outline 26/27 budget priorities, review family and student handbook, School Improvement Plan, tentative strategic goals, community projects, parent arrival and drop off times, and assemblies.

Ms. Morin asked if there were any questions? There were none.

Westport Middle High School - Ms. Charette reported the School Council meeting attendance has been limited. Their focus was preparation for the NEASC visit in December. They reviewed reports for accuracy, had thorough discussion on curriculum, looked at student handbook, gum chewing cell phones, metal water bottles, bathroom protocol, E-hall Pass and AI policies. Latest meeting focused on innovation career pathways. Next 2 meetings will be March 25 and May 20 at 2:30 pm. members can join virtually.

Ms. Charette asked if there were any questions? There were none.

j. NEASC Findings – Ms. Charette gave a report on the New England Association of School and Colleges NEASC. There were 8 visiting team members that came December 7 - 10, 2025. They received a report in January 2026 noting Westport to be a warm and welcoming environment. Ms. Charette shared areas for growth and next steps. In 3 years, a report will be written to NEASC on what work has been done in our priority areas, then another report in 2 more years. In 2033, NEASC will come back for a collaborative conference.

Chair Thrasher asked for an update on the progress with the written curriculum. Ms. Charette explained a completed written curriculum in every single course is the standard. Ms. Charette shared they are refining the program of studies. Teachers have been doing a lot of work on the curriculum.

k. Discussion of Funding Sources for Cafeteria Mural at WMHS – Ms. Charette gave some background explaining the original plan was to have pictures of Westport hung in the white space above the cafeteria serving line, however they have remained blank. Art Teachers Melissa Lambert and Gina Bramwell worked with a parent Roger Andrews in designing a mural with colored panels. This part was funded from the Class of 2023. David Andrews will be doing the painting paid for with DECA and SADD dormant club accounts and parent boosters. This will be for the WMHS lettering.

V. Action Agenda - *(taken out of order)*

a. Act on Funding Sources for Cafeteria Mural at WMHS -

A motion was made to use dormant account funds from DECA Club and SADD Club for the mural project. Motion by Gendreau, seconded by Sampers 5/0/0

Return to regular agenda:

IV. Informational Agenda -

l. SCEC Annual Report for the Record - Chair Thrasher referred to the SCEC South Coast Educational Collaborative summary of Annual Report 2024-2025 placed in the committee's packets. Chair Thrasher would like this to be considered, acknowledged and placed on the record.

Chair Thrasher asked if there were any questions? There were none.

m. Discussion of School Choice for 26/27 SY - Dr. Roy asked principals what they can support in student enrollment numbers. They can accommodate 9th grade to offer 5 seats and 10th grade to offer 5 seats. There would be no seats in 4th grade.

Mr. Pacheco asked for updated enrollment figures.

n. Discussion of 26/27 SY Calendar - Chair Thrasher mentioned the proposed calendar is included in the packets.

Chair Thrasher asked if there were any questions?

Discussion was held on the benefits of starting school before or after Labor Day, Election Day change for schools and Professional Development Day for teachers.

It was noted the calendar should say January 2027 not January 2026.

V. Action Agenda - *(taken out of order)*

b. Review and Act on 26/27 School Year Calendar -

A motion was made to approve the 26/27 Calendar with the date revision.

Motion by Gendreau

Chair Thrasher asked if calendar approval can wait?

Mr. Gendreau rescinded his motion, there was no second on the motion.

Chair Thrasher will revisit this at next meeting.

Return to regular agenda:

IV. Informational Agenda -

o. Acknowledgment of the following Grants:

1. Mass Cultural Council, Landforms Through Art – WMHS $350

2. Bay Coast Bank, Senior Dinner – WMHS $750

3. Westport Education Foundation, Science Programming in Partnership with Westport River Watershed Alliance, 5th Grade and AP Environmental Science– WMHS $4000

4. Grimshaw-Gudewicz Charitable Foundation, Senior Scholarship – WMHS $5000

5. Westport Education Foundation, Math Camp – WMHS $3280

6. Office of Economic Empowerment, Credit for Life Fair – WHMS $3200

7. D. Holdings, Chromebook Replacement Donation - $275

Members acknowledged all the listed grants and thanked all the groups for their support.

p. First Read of the following Policies: Chair Thrasher reported there are 291 policies. During the past several months policy workshops were conducted, most revisions are from the guidance of MASC Massachusetts Association of School Committees and state and federal laws. All policies are updated and are available to view online.

A motion was made to dispense with formal reading of the policies and consider the policies listed on tonight's agenda as received with this being the First Read.

Motion by Gendreau, seconded by Sampers 5/0/0

Chair Thrasher reported these policies will return for Second Read and potential adoption.

1. A Policies- AA, AB, AC, ACA, ACAB, ACE, ADB (delete), ADC, ADDA, ADF, AE

2. B Policies- BA, BAA, BB, BBA, BBAA, BBBA, BBBB, BBBC, BBBE, BCA, BD, BDA, BDB, BDC, BDD, BDE, BDF, BDFA, BDFA-E-1, BDFA-E-2, BDFA-E-3, BDG, BE, BEC, BEDB, BEDD, BEDF, BEDH, BEDH-E, BEE, BG. BGB, BGC, BGD, BGE, BGF, BHE, BIA, BIBA, BID, BJ (delete), BK (delete)

3. C Policies- CA, CB, CBD, CBI, CCB, CE, CH, CHA/CHC, CHC (delete), CHCA, CHD, CL (delete), CM

4. D Policies- DA, DB, DBC, DBD, DBG, DBJ, DD, DEC, DGA, DH, DI, DIE, DJ, DIE, DJ, DJA, DJE, DK, DKC

5. E Policies- EB, EBAB, EBB, EBC, EBC-S (delete), EBCD, EBCFA (delete), EC, ECA, ECAC, ECAF, EDC, EEA, EEAA, EEAE, EEAEA, EEAEB, EEAEC, EEAJ, EEBA, EFC, EFD, EFE, EHB

6. F Policies- FA, FCB, FF, FFA

7. G Policies- GA, GBA, GBD, GBEA, GBEB, GBEBA, GBEBC, GBEBD, GBEC, GBED, GBGB, GBGE, GBGF, GBI, GBJ, GBJAA (delete), GCA, GCBA, GCBB, GCBC, GCE, GCF, GCG, GCIAA (delete), GCIA (delete), GCJ (delete), GCK (delete), GCO, GCQE (delete), GCQF, GCRD (delete), GDA, GDB, GDG (delete), GDH (delete), GDO (delete), GDQD (delete)

8. H Policies – HA, HB, HF

9. I Policies – IB, IC/ICA, ID, IE (delete), IGA/IGD, IGB, IGD (delete), IHAE (delete), IHAIA, IHAJ (delete), IHAM, IHAM-R, IHAMA, IHAMB, IHB, IHBA, IHBAA, IHBD, IHBEA, IHBF, IHBH, IHBHE, IHCA, IJ, IJ-R, IJKA (delete), IJL, IJLA, IJNDC, IJND (delete), IJNDB, IJNDC (delete), IJNDD, IJOA, IJOB, IJOC, IKAB, IKE, ILBA (delete),ILD, IMA (delete), IMB, IMD, IMDB, IMG, IMGA

10. J Policies – JB, JBA (delete), JBB, JC, JCA, JE (delete), JF, JFAA (delete), JFABC, JFABD, JFABE, JFABF, JFABG, JFBB, JFBB-1, JH-E (delete), JHFC (delete), JI, JIB, JIC, JICA, JICB (delete), JICC, JICCA (delete), JICE, JICF, JICFA, JICFA-E, JICFB, JICH, JICH-R (delete), JICI (delete), JICJ, JICK, JIE, JIH, JIHA (delete), JIHB (delete), JII, JJ, JJA, JJE, JJH, JJH-R, JJIB, JJIF, JJIF-R, JJJ (delete), JK, JKA (delete), JKAA, JL, JLC, JLCA, JLCB, JLCC, JLCD, JLCF (delete), JQ, JRA, JRC (delete), JRD (delete)

11. K Policies - KA, KB (delete), KBA, KBB (delete), KBBA, KBC (delete), KBE, KBG, KCD, KDB, KDC, KDCB, KDD, KE, KEB (delete), KHA, KHB, KI, KLG, KLJ (delete), KLK

12. L Policies – LA, LB, LD (delete), LDA, LH (delete)

V. Action Agenda

a. Act on Funding Sources for Cafeteria Mural at WMHS - Done above.

b. Review and Act on 26/27 School Year Calendar - Done above.

c. Review and Act on SC Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, January 7, 2026 and SC Budget Work Session for Wednesday, January 7, 2026.

A motion was made to approve SC Meeting Minutes for Wednesday, January 7, 2026 and SC Budget Work Session for Wednesday, January 7, 2026.

Motion by Pacheco, seconded by Sampers 5/0/0

d. Review and Act on the following Field Trips:

1. WES Field Trip to Roger Williams Park Zoo, Providence RI – May 20. 2026
2. WMHS Field Trip to Roger Williams Botanical Center, Providence RI – May 11, 2026
3. WMHS Field Trip to Bitty and Beau's Coffee Shop, Providence RI – March 12, 2026

Chair Thrasher asked if there were any questions? There were none.

A motion was made to approve WES Field Trip to Roger Williams Park Zoo, Providence RI – May 20. 2026, WMHS Field Trip to Roger Williams Botanical Center, Providence RI – May 11, 2026 and WMHS Field Trip to Bitty and Beau's Coffee Shop, Providence RI – March 12, 2026.

Motion by Gendreau, seconded by Pacheco 5/0/0

VI. Routine Matters:

- Correspondence and Notices - There were none.
- Discussion of Future Agenda Items - Chair Thrasher asked if any members want items for the future agenda?

Mr. Melnyk asked if there were any meetings between now and the next election date? Chair Thrasher reported the next meeting will be April.

Mr. Pacheco requested a report on coaches for Spring and Fall and clarity for volunteering requirements at the high school for students.

Mr. Gendreau requested an update on field conditions for upcoming sports.

VII. Topics the Chair could not Reasonably Anticipate Forty-eight (48) Hours in advance of the meeting - There were none.

VIII. Adjourn - A motion was made to adjourn. With members being present and voting individually and unanimously, the motion passes. Motion by Gendreau, seconded by Pacheco 5/0/0

Roll call vote:

Gendreau	Yes	Melnyk	Yes	Pacheco	Yes	Sampers	Yes	Thrasher	Yes

The School Committee Regular Meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Meeting Documents

WCS Bill Warrants: 3/6/2026, 2/20/26, 2/6/26, 1/23/26
Staff and Student Attendance Reports
First Read - All Policies listed on the agenda
NEASC Report of the Visiting Team 12/07/25-12/10/25
NEASC letter dated January 23, 2026 on the Decennial Accreditation Report
Civic Engagement In Our Democracy Frequently Asked Questions
SEPAC Bylaws 2/10/26
Cafeteria Mural Project Funding Plan Memo March 9, 2026
Summary of South Coast Educational Collaborative Annual Report 2024-2025
School Choice FY 26/27
Mass Cultural Council, Landforms Through Art – WMHS $350
Bay Coast Bank, Senior Dinner – WMHS $750
Westport Education Foundation, Science Programming in Partnership with Westport River Watershed Alliance, 5th Grade and AP Environmental Science– WMHS $4000
Grimshaw-Gudewicz Charitable Foundation, Senior Scholarship – WMHS $5000
Westport Education Foundation, Math Camp – WMHS $3280
Office of Economic Empowerment, Credit for Life Fair – WHMS $3200
D. Holdings, Chromebook Replacement Donation - $275
Policies: EEAEAA, EFCC
26/27 School Year Calendar Draft
WES Field Trip to Roger Williams Park Zoo, Providence RI – May 20. 2026,
WMHS Field Trip to Roger Williams Botanical Center, Providence RI – May 11, 2026
WMHS Field Trip to Bitty and Beau's Coffee Shop, Providence RI – March 12, 2026

Submitted by Sharon Pinho School Committee Recording Secretary