

WESTWOOD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Westwood, Massachusetts

MEETING MINUTES
September 14, 2023

Attendance and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:29pm by Chair Tony Mullin. Also present were: Maya Khuri Plotkin, Amanda Phillips, Dorothy Parmelee; and JoAnna French. Superintendent Piwowar, Assistant Superintendent Allison Borchers, and Director of Finance and Operations Lemma Jn-baptiste were present on behalf of the District.

Westwood Media Center was recognized for providing a live-stream of the meeting.

Harley Pease recorded the minutes.

Superintendent's Report

Introduction of Student Services Director and Thurston Middle School Dean

Superintendent Piwowar introduced new Director of Student Services Susan Maselli and new Dean of Students at TMS Erin Banty.

Summer Programming and School Opening

Superintendent Piwowar and Assistant Superintendent Allison Borchers highlighted summer programming and beginning of school activities across the district.

Director of Finance and Operations Lemma Jn-baptiste highlighted of the summer capital projects that were completed this summer. Projects included but were not limited to: phone upgrades, roof HVAC unit upgrade, WHS auditorium lighting upgrade, and more. The district network upgrade details were provided by Director of Technology, Learning, and Innovation Steve Ouellette.

District Strategic Priorities

Superintendent Piwowar provided a brief overview of the 2023-2024 district strategic priorities.

School Start Times Update

Principal Amy Davenport provided an update on how the school start times shift has been affecting the high school. Principal Davenport noted that tardy rates are down. From a qualitative point of view, Principal Davenport noted that students and staff both seemed more alert during first block. Principal Davenport also has noticed that more students are staying in the building during lunch block.

Superintendent Entry Plan

Superintendent Piwowar provided an update on his entry plan.

Public Participation

There was no public participation.

School Committee Chair Update/Liaison Reports

Chair Mullin announced that the first School Committee Roundtable will be on October 17th at 6:30pm in the Westwood High School Professional Development Room.

Chair Mullin had a few updates from the Select Board. Chair Mullin announced that there will not be a fall town meeting. Chair Mullin announced the Town of Westwood's free cash flow was slightly higher than anticipated.

School building project update

Maya Plotkin provided an update on the school building project. Ms. Plotkin provided many photos of the building project. Ms. Plotkin provided a summary of the many sustainable features of the new Pine Hill School.

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Discussion Items

2023-2024 District Goals

Chair Mullin asked about long-term capital planning. Superintendent Piwowar noted that all buildings have needs. Sheehan Elementary and TMS were highlighted as buildings that are two of the higher priorities.

Maya Plotkin asked about the district's goals around Artificial Intelligence. Superintendent Piwowar highlighted that there is no guidance right now from the Department of Education.

School Building Facility Tours

Maya Plotkin noted that the tour of TMS showcased some of the needs the building has. JoAnna French echoed some of the same sentiments as Ms. Plotkin.

Development of School Calendar

Chair Mullin asked the Committee if there is data needed in order to develop the school calendar. What would be best for teachers, students, and parents?

Dori Parmelee asked about short Wednesdays and what the rationale is for having them. Superintendent Piwowar noted that short Wednesdays are critical for professional development for staff. Assistant Superintendent Allison Borchers noted that the number of days varies from year to year, typically between nineteen to twenty-two. It varies due to need and calendar logistics surrounding parent-teacher conferences and other district events. Assistant Superintendent highlighted that equity audit findings are being implemented on short Wednesdays as well as SEL professional development, IEP fidelity implementation work, and artificial intelligence work.

Action Items

MOTION made by Amanda Phillips to approve the 2023-2024 District Priorities. Motion seconded by Maya Plotkin.

Roll-call vote:

Anthony Mullin: **Yes**
Amanda Phillips: **Yes**
Maya Plotkin: **Yes**
Dorothy Parmelee: **Yes**
JoAnna French: **Yes**

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

MOTION made by Dori Parmelee to approve school handbooks. Motion seconded Maya Plotkin.

Roll-call vote:

Anthony Mullin: **Yes**
Amanda Phillips: **Yes**
Maya Plotkin: **Yes**
Dorothy Parmelee: **Yes**
JoAnna French: **Yes**

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

MOTION made by JoAnna French approve the July 13, 2023 meeting minutes. Motion seconded by Dori Parmelee.

Roll-call vote:

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Anthony Mullin: Yes
Amanda Phillips: Yes
Maya Plotkin: Yes
Dorothy Parmelee: Yes
JoAnna French: Yes

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

MOTION made by Dori Parmelee to approve the appointment of Superintendent Piwowar to the TEC Board of Directors. Motion seconded by Maya Plotkin.

Roll-call vote:

Anthony Mullin: Yes
Amanda Phillips: Yes
Maya Plotkin: Yes
Dorothy Parmelee: Yes
JoAnna French: Yes

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

MOTION made by Maya Plotkin to approve the Prodigy Program Instructions pay rates. Motion seconded by Amanda Phillips.

Roll-call vote:

Anthony Mullin: Yes
Amanda Phillips: Yes
Maya Plotkin: Yes
Dorothy Parmelee: Yes
JoAnna French: Yes

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

New Business

Dori Parmelee wished her son David a happy 13th birthday!

Amanda Phillips asked about cell phone usage at Thurston Middle School and potentially exploring cell phone usage.

Amanda Phillips asked about free time at the high school and possibly exploring looking at what other districts are doing.

Adjournment

MOTION made by Maya Plotkin to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Dori Parmelee.

Roll-call vote:

Anthony Mullin: Yes
Amanda Phillips: Yes
Maya Plotkin: Yes
Dorothy Parmelee: Yes
JoAnna French: Yes

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

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The meeting was adjourned at 7:36pm.