

**Westwood School Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 19, 2016**

Present:

Josepha Jowdy- Chairperson
Carol Lewis, Vice Chairperson
Brian Kelly - Clerk
Tony Mullin, Committee member
Meredith Brodsky, Student Liaison

John Antonucci, Superintendent
Emily Parks, Assistant Superintendent
Abby Hanscom, Director of Student Services
Heath Petracca, Director of Finance and Business

Meeting called to order 7:07pm

Pledge of Allegiance

Meeting was recorded by WestCAT

School Committee Reorganization (7:08 pm)

Nomination for Chairperson: Josepha Jowdy by Ms. Lewis
Seconded Mr. Kelly
Official Vote: unanimous approval

Nomination for Vice Chairperson: Carol Lewis by Mr. Kelly
Seconded by Mr. Mullin
Official vote: unanimous approval

Nomination for Clerk: Brian Kelly by Ms. Lewis
Seconded by Mr. Mullin
Official vote: unanimous approval

Superintendent's report (7:10-7:33)

Recognition of 2016 Elementary Math Meet winners

Mark someone

Town-wide Math Meets happen in January and April. This was the 8th annual meet, and there were about 195 participants. All 5 elementary schools participate in grades 3,4,5.

Winners Recognized:

3rd grade Deerfield

4th grade Martha Jones

5th grade Sheehan

2 individual winners were also recognized, Connor Long and Mark Papetti.

Ms. Lewis asked how long Mark Plecinoga has been running it? Mr. Plecinoga said 8 years.

Presentation/Recognition of Girl Scout Gold Award winner Bridget Doherty

Bridget was awarded her Gold Award pin by the Girl Scouts of Eastern Massachusetts. It is the highest recognition in scouting in grades 9-12. She presented "A Legacy Not Forgotten" which told how the William E Sheehan school got its name.

Bridget thanked her troop leaders and donated her book to Ms. Evans for use for the library at Sheehan

Dr. Antonucci recognized Ms. Brodsky for her contributions to the committee this year.

Update from Space and Capital needs Study Public forum

The Public Forum was held last week. About 30 people attended.

The Committee needs to determine next steps, so the decision was made for this to be on the agenda at every future meeting.

Correspondence regarding School Start Times

School start times will be discussed at another meeting. Ms. Jowdy suggested they also have a conversation with other schools before the next meeting.

Public participation (7:33)

None

Discussion Items (7:33-8:44)

Presentation by Eric Arnold, Executive Director of Hale, on the development of an Innovation School, “Intrepid Academy” (7:33-8:02)

Mr. Arnold outlined the proposal to have Hale operate as a BPS “Intrepid Academy”, also known as an Innovation School. They would be a partnership with schools to help achieve curriculum goals.

- Decision to establish a semester school program
- Submitted a proposal to Boston Public Schools
- Proposal was accepted and approved
- Asked to submit a prospectus in June
- Design plans due in October
- Open in Fall of 2017

Provisions:

Urban/Suburban mix, Juniors in High School

Overview (could change)

- 40-60 students
- Semester-long (Spring and Fall)
- Day program
- Modeled after: Concord-Carlisle Rivers and Revolutions, Newton Global Education, Chewonki – Maine Coast Semester etc.

3 themes:

- Outdoors
- Active
- Personalized learning

They will have required and elective courses, and a rigorous and diverse series of assessments.

- Schedule- 18 weeks per semester
- 10-12 weeks of guide led instruction
- 6-8 weeks of student centered inquiry

Looking to address:

- Screen time and connection to nature
- Teen stress
- Passion for learning

Ms. Jowdy asked how this might effect junior year, with AP courses etc. Ms. Parks suggested we might need to do electives differently.

Mr. Kelly asked if this will effect college applications? Ms. Parks said the target participants are not AP students, and is also not intended for kids who are struggling

Ms. Jowdy asked what they need from the Committee? Mr. Arnold said they don't know yet. What about cost? Dr. Antonucci said they don't know yet.

Ms. Lewis asked how the curriculum is broken down? Mr. Arnold said kids would take a typical 5-6 class load. They would all be taking the same classes together. Ms. Lewis asked how do you get a staff that is willing to work outdoors when we have difficult weather, etc.? 2Mr. Arnold answered that the two teachers that have been involved with this in the BPS would be part of the faculty. Also there are buildings on the grounds, so classes can be held indoors as needed.

Ms. Lewis asked how do we determine who goes? Mr. Arnold answered that Guidance Counselors can help guide students, with parental input.

Ms. Lewis said it might be a possibility is to let the program run for a year, then the district can determine if they want students to enter into it.

Ms. Brodsky said she thinks it's appealing that it's a day program, so kids can still maintain normalcy (be close to home), and can do SAT prep outside of school.

Mr. Mullin said it would be helpful to learn about other programs like Concord, and define who the target student is.

Ms. Parks said it brings together themes the district is trying to focus on- authentic engagement, social and mental health, and programs for ALL students.

Ms. Jowdy said we should definitely keep talking. Mr. Kelly said he was deeply skeptical. Ms. Lewis has skepticism but is very curious to hear more. Mr. Mullin would also like to hear more.

Dr. Antonucci disclosed his wife is the president of the Hale Board of Directors. Ms. Parks has volunteered to be a part of the curriculum advisory board.

Findings and Recommendations from the Science Curriculum Review **(8:03-8:42)**

Allison Borchers, and other team members

- They are about a year into this process
- Team was quite diversified

Vision:

An Inquiry based approach to science, they ask good questions and the systematic approach to answers leads them to more questions.

Review Process:

- Developed vision and guiding questions
- Research
- Drafted recommendations

District:

- Align curriculum PreK-12 to new standards adopted in January 2016
- New computer science and digital literacy standards are coming, so there will be a need to complete a separate curriculum review.
- Communication between buildings and levels about science curriculum and instruction must improve: preference is to have a science head at each level: elementary, middle, and high school
- Critical recommendations from 2008 were never implemented. Need to develop a clear process and timeline for communication and implementation of recommendations.

Elementary: PreK – 5th grade

- Provide high quality professional development- most teachers do not come in with a strong science background
- Engineering: Align lessons with new standard and create at least one common, inquiry based experience for each unit in each grade
- Instructional time falls short: revise schedule and increase time to 2 hours /week (pre-k to grade 2) and 3 hours /week (grade 3-5).
 - Mr. Mullin asked what it is currently? Ms. Parks said it is about 45 minutes a week.
- Increase focus on non-fiction reading and writing: work with literacy professionals to integrate science texts into reading/writing workshop time. And create building-based libraries of science-related texts for all levels
- Create a leadership team for elementary science
- Non-Westwood pre-school do not have consistent experiences: Reach out through preschool directors network to share and promote standards-based pre-K science lessons (partially staffed already for FY17 school year)
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Middle school (Dan Kiernan spoke to this)

- Align with new standards

- MCAS science scores lag behind their scores in ELA and math, and comparative districts. Continue analysis and track impact of curriculum realignment. Refine instruction and offer intervention.
- Class periods are too short for inquiry based work: investigate options for longer blocks in general or on lab days.
- Science texts outdated. Replace with new texts or other curriculum resources (such as digital content).

Ms. Jowdy asked if costs are being considered? Ms. Parks says she has been anticipating these recommendations and there will be budget available.

Regarding MCAS scores, Mr. Mullin asked what are the one or 2 magic bullets to help? Ms. Borchers said they already kicked off the technology and engineering course. And we need to push students to learn how to think like a scientist. Old frameworks were too content focused.

High School:

Students were surveyed.

Hands on, lab-based, project-based lessons were liked the most. Students liked discovering science, instead of proving something a teacher told them.

- Provide more professional development time
- Limited time for independent science research: promote independent study through SIPP and other student-directed learning programs
- 2 classrooms are not currently configured to support labs and inquiry based work: Update and retrofit A206 and A236
- Information about students' science related post-graduate decisions and achievements is not available: Design and implement a survey tool that provides feedback about students post grad science pursuits.
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There is a 3-year timeline to implement (February 2019).

Ms. Lewis commented on the tremendous commitment from this team.

Ms. Parks thanked Ms. Borchers for her work chairing the committee.

Second Reading: Domestic Violence Leave (per MGL, Ch. 149, Sec 52e) (8:42-8:44)

2nd reading tonight.

No comments or questions at this time.

Action Items (8:44-8:55)

Annual Vote on School Choice

Dr. Antonucci explained that if Westwood was a school choice district students from other towns come to our schools. We do not have the space, and Dr. Antonucci recommends we do not participate.

The motion to pass the resolution was made by Ms. Lewis. Seconded by Mr. Kelly.

Votes:

- Mr. Donahue: (Absent)
- Ms. Jowdy: Yea
- Mr. Kelly: Yea
- Ms. Lewis: Yea
- Mr. Mullin: Yea

The motion was passed by unanimous approval.

Approval of Out of State/Overnight trips

Up for consideration:

- Italy and Greece: Feb. 2017
- Belize: Feb. 2017
- Ireland/England: April 2017

Dr. Antonucci was initially concerned about the costs of these trips. But he was pleased to see the costs are under 3K.

All trips are subject to usual concerns, and would require trip insurance.

Mr. Bevan said the China trip proposal would be presented in June, for an April 2017 trip.

Motion to approve all trips that were presented tonight was made by Mr. Kelly. Seconded by Ms. Lewis.

Official vote: unanimous approval

Ratification of AA collective bargaining agreement

Motion to accept the ratification was made by Mr. Kelly. Seconded by Mr. Mullin

Official vote: unanimous approval

Approval of Minutes 4/14/16

Ms. Parks asked to make a correction in the minutes in regards to the first reading of the Domestic Violence Leave Act. The minutes say this is a new state law policy allowing this leave. The minutes should read that the new state law policy requires the leave.

Motion to approve: Ms. Lewis. Seconded by Mr. Kelly.

Official vote: unanimous approval

New business (8:55)

None

Dr. Antonucci said he has been looking into how to make the alumni connection. Maybe we need to create a LinkedIn group or something similar.

Public Participation (8:57)

None

Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Mr. Kelly. Seconded by Ms. Lewis.

Official vote: unanimous approval

Meeting adjourned at 8:57