

**Westwood School Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 16, 2016**

Present:

Josepha Jowdy- Chairperson
Carol Lewis, Vice Chairperson
Brian Kelly, Clerk (late arrival)
Tony Mullin, Committee member
Charles Donahue, Committee member
Owen Doherty, WHS Student representative

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

Meeting called to order 7:04 pm

Pledge of Allegiance

Meeting was recorded by WestCAT

Superintendent's report (7:04-7:26)

Recognition of Westwood High Boys Golf Team: 2016 State Champions

The team was presented with plaques honoring this accomplishment.

Westwood High School Participation in MIAA/Special Olympics Unified Sports Program

Mr. Bevan mentioned we were approached by the MIAA to be a partner in the unified sports program, which joins people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team. They will do this in 2 sports (basketball and track), and it is a 3-year contract. The Special Olympics provides funds to pay coaches. 20 schools in southern Mass. currently participate.

It will roll out in the Spring.

Upcoming Full Day Kindergarten Survey

Dr. Antonucci said we are looking into moving to a more traditional elementary school schedule, so a survey will go out to current K parents and Gr 1 parents to gauge interest.

Ms. Lewis asked if there is a reason to move in that direction? Ms. Parks said it is education (what can we accomplish without the time pressure), and that most kids in kindergarten are already currently enrolled in the full day program.

The fee structure, if we move in that direction, will not change.

Earlier School Start Times Update

There will be a sub committee convened (Ms. Jowdy, Mr. Mullin, and Ms. Parks) to assess starting the high school day later.

Alumni Survey Update

Dr. Antonucci mentioned he is working with Endicott College on creating an alumni survey, and sent the committee a survey from the Franklin Public Schools as an example of what we might strive for.

Ms. Lewis asked do they ever do open ended questions on the surveys (not just yes or no questions). Dr. Antonucci said yes that is absolutely possible.

Ms. Jowdy asked how far back are we going for the alumni participants. Dr. Antonucci said 10 years or earlier.

Mr. Donahue said we should look at how long it might take to fill it out, and structure it accordingly to get a better response rate.

Ms. Jowdy asked if they do a senior exit survey? Ms. Hanscom said yes they do. Mr. Doherty said students do groan about filling it out, and thinks the shorter the survey the better.

Public Participation (7:27)

None

Discussion Items (7:27-8:24)

Special Education Program Overview (7:27-7:43)

(Ms. Hanscom)

576 students out of 3163 with IEPs (18% of all WPS students) broken out in to 11 federal/state categories of primary categories. Developmental delays and SLDs are most prominent.

Severity

380 kids are moderate, and receive a few to about 10 hours per week of special education. 55 students fall into high needs, most of their day is spent on special education. Low needs, about ½ hour to 5 or 6 hours per week.

Less than one percent of special needs students are served out of district, there is a good structure within our schools

Mr. Donahue asked about future needs? Ms. Hanscom is working on that for next year's planning. Having 5 small elementary schools makes it more complex, but 3 of the 5 schools currently have programs for students.

Last year's investments are helping in the school system (addition of a social worker and adding a teacher that specializes in autism).

Elementary Science: Update on STEMscopes curriculum rollout (7:44-8:17)

(Ms. Parks)

What's new in Elementary Science? Curriculum framework, focus on big science concepts, application to real world situations and problem solving

Science and engineering practices are skills that are developed over time.

How is it different?

New standards mirror reality of science field.

- Students define the problem and then create the experiment,
- engineering process is integrated into several units,
- vocabulary is not front loaded
- encourage and leave room for "grappling"
- scientific inquiry as a more cyclical process.

What's the plan?

There is a 3-year alignment process.

- Year 1 physical science
- Year 2 earth and space
- Year 3 life sciences

What was the Transition?

We formed an elementary science leadership team, includes our elementary science coordinator

- June: determined we would begin with STEMscopes (developed at Rice University)- fully online curriculum and resources for teachers

Ms. Jowdy asked if other districts are using it? Ms. Parks said there is no real trend on how they are approaching this.

- July/Aug: Ms. Parks did some further research on STEMscopes (references from other schools, contracted our own review)
- Sept: Professional development for the leadership team began (5 “e”s model: Engage, explore, explain, extend/elaborate, evaluate)
- Oct: District launch on 10/5
- Nov: Provided content to grade level teams
- Dec- May: pilot physical science program
- June: plan for next year

Ms. Jowdy suggested we do a similar program for parents for science as they do for Math.

Mr. Mullin suggested that we connect the sciences to actual careers. Ms. Parks said that they are making those correlations.

Mr. Donahue asked who can participate in science fairs? 2nd through fifth, some do all grades. Mr. Donahue asked are we able to bring on another science resource? Ms. Parks said they tried to find a half resource, but could not find the right person.

Update on WHS NEASC status (8:18-8:24)

Mr. Bevan reminded us this was supposed to be our peer review year (2016).

NEASC has gone through 2 major changes: they made changes to the process (done), and standards are being updated now. Standards will be finalized by summer 2017. Due to these issues we will remain in postponement (will not affect our accreditation during this time).

We will possibly re-engage fully in 2018 for a 2020 visit. Mr. Bevan mentioned they want to watch other school going through the process first.

Action Items (8:24-8:27)

Third Reading: Revised Student Activity Agency Accounts Policy

Motion to approve the Revised Student Activity Agency Accounts policy was made by Mr. Mullin. Seconded by Ms. Lewis.

Official vote: Unanimous approval

Approval of Minutes October 20, 2016

A motion to approve the October minutes was made by Ms. Lewis. Seconded by Mr. Mullin.

Official vote: Unanimous approval

New Business (8:28-8:31)

Mr. Mullin mentioned he's getting a lot of positive feedback on the solar panel projects. He suggested we make some positive press/schedule a ribbon cutting, something of a hype about it.

Mr. Donahue mentioned he has been getting calls about capital planning. He feels we should keep it moving forward somehow.

Mr. Donahue brought up the SIPP program, and mentioned the possibility of bringing in alumni to speak about their careers. What does Mr. Doherty think? Mr. Doherty said the SIPP program is very popular, and it's tough to get accepted. He thinks kids might be interested in what comes next for them, to help put the things they are learning in the program in perspective.

Ms. Parks also mentioned a career night they used to do, and also a lunchtime series. Mr. Doherty said students might be interested.

Public Participation (8:31)

None

Adjournment to executive session

A motion to move to the executive session was made by Mr. Donahue.
Seconded by Mr. Mullin.

Official vote: Unanimous approval

Meeting adjourned to Executive Session at 8:32