

WESTWOOD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Westwood, Massachusetts

MEETING MINUTES
March 20, 2025

Attendance and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm by Amanda Phillips. Also present was Maya Plotkin, Dori Parmelee, JoAnna French, and Anthony Mullin. Superintendent Piwowar, Assistant Superintendent Ahern and Director of Finance and Operations Lemma Jn-baptiste were present on behalf of the district.

Harley Pease recorded the minutes.

Superintendent's Report

Seen Around WPS

Superintendent Piwowar shared some recent events that happened around the WPS, including highlights from Martha Jones, Pine Hill, Thurston Middle School, Westwood High School and the Downey elementary school.

Introduction of the new Athletic Director

Superintendent Piwowar introduced the new Athletic Director, Richkaard Verrier. Richkaard was previously the Assistant AD in the Needham Public Schools.

Strategic Planning Process

Superintendent Piwowar shared the goal for the Strategic Planning Process, which is to develop a multi-year strategic plan to provide a roadmap for improvement efforts that allow students to achieve outcomes in our Portrait of a Graduate. A Strategic Planning Team to support the development of a plan. It will comprise a diverse set of stakeholders, including teachers, students, and parents/caregivers.

Professional Development Update

Asst. Superintendent Caitlin Ahern provided an update to the Committee on the types of PD educators engage in over the course of the year. The three categories are: Early Release Wednesdays, After-School Course Catalog, and PD Partnerships.

Public Participation

There was no public participation.

Liaison Reports

Chair Phillips announced that the next school committee roundtable will be on April 2nd.

Maya Plotkin announced that the facilities study presentation will occur at the April School Committee meeting. Ms. Plotkin also gave some appreciation for the WHS musical, Catch Me If You Can.

Ms. French provided the Committee with an update on the dog park efforts behind the Pine Hill school. Families can be assured that safety is a top priority and the group will be working to provide alternative locations for the dog park.

Student Representative Kevin Bai provided the Committee with an update on the cell phone task force, including feedback from the faculty and staff. Mr. Bai also updated the Committee on the availability of menstrual products in the student bathrooms, indicating that there will be efforts to make sure that they are available.

Superintendent Piwowar provided some more detail about his Candid Conversations with members of the community regarding special education.

WESTWOOD SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Westwood, Massachusetts

Discussion Items

Impact of Federal Education Policies

Supt. Piwowar provided some information regarding funding from the federal government. Westwood does not receive funds directly from the US Dept. of Education. Funds are provided to DESE, who distributes funds to districts. FY26 federal grants to Westwood include SPED IDEA Grant, Early Childhood Education Grant, and Teacher Quality (Title II) Grant. Funding for the school lunch program comes from the US Dept. of Agriculture.

Naming Process for School Spaces

Chair Phillips introduced the topic to the Committee. Chair Mullin highlighted that a process is needed, and that only one space has been named after an individual in his nine years on the Committee. Mr. Mullin is looking for guiding principles and a potential process. The Committee decided that creating a working group is the answer at this moment in time.

Action Items

MOTION made by Tony Mullin to approve the February 13 meeting minutes. Motion seconded by Maya Plotkin.

Roll-call vote:

Amanda Phillips: **Yes**

Maya Plotkin: **Yes**

Dorothy Parmelee: **Yes**

JoAnna French: **Yes**

Anthony Mullin: **Yes**

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

New Business

There was no new business.

Executive Session and Adjournment

MOTION made by Dori Parmelee to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the Committee and adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Tony Mullin.

Roll-call vote:

Amanda Phillips: **Yes**

Maya Plotkin: **Yes**

Dorothy Parmelee: **Yes**

JoAnna French: **Yes**

Anthony Mullin: **Yes**

Result: 5-0-0 (Approved)

The meeting adjourned at 7:21pm.