

**Westwood Public Schools Committee  
School Committee Agenda  
Thurston Middle School Annex  
Thursday, December 12, 2019  
6:30pm**

**Present:**

Anthony Mullin, Chairperson  
Joseph Jowdy, Vice Chairperson  
Carol Lewis, Clerk  
Maya Plotkin, Committee Member  
Charles Donahue, Committee Member  
Ayesha Tariq, WHS Student Representative- not in attendance

Emily Parks, Superintendent  
Allison Borchers, Assistant Superintendent  
Lemma Jn-baptiste, Director of Business and Finance  
Abby Hanscom, Director of Student Services

**Meeting called to order 6:30pm  
Pledge of Allegiance**

*Meeting was recorded by Westwood Media Center*

**Superintendent's Report (6:30-6:36)**

FY'21 Budget Process Update

Ms. Parks reported that the Budget Steering Committee met again last week. They talked about the district's additional capital requests. Looking for funding in two areas: the second phase of the Thurston HVAC project at a cost of \$150K; and to continue the security updates based on the security audit for \$150K. Pam Dukeman will be taking this request to the Select Board to discuss this additional funding article. Ms. Parks met with all the cost center leaders and collected all of the budget requests. All requests exceed what we can afford to fund. She will begin to establish the priorities for the budget. Themes that are emerging: district enrollment will be stable at all levels next year, so staffing will remain stable in general classroom; general education programming will focus on middle school ELA; emerging needs in SEL; and special education. These will have short and long term implications on the budget. Will take a deep look at the structural issues in the budget with Ms. Jn-baptiste, who will be going through this budget process for the first time this year. Ms. Parks wanted to see if there would be an interest with the School Committee members to have a one hour training on special education issues. The members would like to participate. The State of MA just passed a new bill about public school funding, the Student Opportunity Act. It will increase funding by \$1.5 billion over the next several years. Foundation formula has been updated to now reflect the realities. Ms. Parks thinks West-

wood will benefit from this, not a huge amount, like some other districts. It will now include transportation cost in the Circuit Breaker reimbursement. In the past it was just tuition. This will roll out in phases, not all in the first year.

### **Discussion Items (6:36-6:55)**

#### *English Language Arts Curriculum Recommendations (6:36-6:54)*

Ms. Borchers reported.

Marcia Uretsky is the ELA and Social Studies Coordinator at the elementary level. Marisa Olivo is the Humanities Department head at the middle school, and Kate Holmes, the English Language Arts department chair at the high school, will help present.

#### Vision statement

- Students in the Westwood Public Schools are curious readers, critical thinkers, careful researchers, thoughtful listeners, effective writers, and powerful speakers.
- They explore, question, and analyze texts that represent diverse voices and experiences.
- They collaborate to share insights and discover new ideas.
- They speak and write to shape their lives, their communities, and their world.
- They use their developing skills to inform, persuade, create, and inspire.

#### K-5 highlights

- Adopt/implement Units of Study program to ensure curriculum alignment.
- Pursue interdisciplinary opportunities.
- Build flexibility into classroom schedules.

#### TMS

- Improve alignment through curriculum analysis and mapping.
- Identify and address specific performance drops and gaps.
- Implement intervention model.
- Create workshop-style lessons.

#### High School

- Vary writing tasks (add persuasive, narrative, and analysis).
- Adapt rubrics in order to provide more effective feedback.
- Provide more opportunities for student choice.

#### District highlights

- Diversify core and optional texts.
- Identify opportunities to teach speaking and listening skills as well as SEL competencies.
- Develop consistent approach to instruction in core skills (grammar, mechanics, handwriting, spelling, keyboarding).
- Build schedules that support instructional goals.

Ms. Plotkin asked if this is recommended this year, and implemented next year? Yes. It will take 2-3 years for it all to be rolled out.

Ms. Jowdy asked if Professional Development will be created regarding this new rolled alignment? Yes, it will take place next year.

Mr. Donahue asked about feedback from graduating seniors and how well prepared they felt they were for college writing? How often do they students write to prepare themselves for college writing? They write daily, it is process writing so getting feedback every step of the way. Asked if creative writing was also being worked on? There is a creative writing course for seniors but will be weaving more of this into the curriculum. He also asked about public speaking and if there had been any feedback with the Dale Carnegie program. All juniors take a public speaking class, it is a requirement for graduation. There is also public speaking in all ELA classes.

*Second reading: Policy JLCA-Physical Examination and Public Health Screening of Students (6:54-6:55)*

Made change to the policy based on discussion at last month's meeting: Added parents will be notified in advance of screenings via a letter to parents and other outreach methods, such as school newsletters and school websites.

#### **Action Items (6:55–6:59)**

*Approval of Minutes: November 4, 2019*

A motion was made to approve the November 4, 2019 minutes by Ms. Jowdy. Seconded by Ms. Plotkin.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

*Approval of Minutes: November 7, 2019*

A motion was made to approve the November 7, 2019 minutes by Ms. Plotkin . Seconded by Ms. Lewis.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

*Vote to accept gift of \$800 from Martha Jones PTO*

A motion to accept a gift of \$800 from Martha Jones PTO to purchase a virtual reality sandbox for science lessons was made by Ms. Jowdy. Seconded by Ms. Lewis.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

*Vote to accept grants totaling \$8,120 from Foundation of Westwood Education*

A motion to approve the gift of \$8,120 to the district:

High School Courageous Conversations - \$1,000

High School Community Conversations: Faces of Immigration - \$800

Deerfield Sensory Pathways - \$1,500

Elementary Cross-Curricular Coding - \$1,900

Preschool STEM Enrichment - \$1,920

High School Musical - SEL Program for Elementary Schools - \$1,000

A motion was made by Ms. Plotkin. Seconded by Ms. Lewis.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

*Vote to update the School Building Committee Membership*

Mr. Mullin would like to add two more people to this committee: Someone with an architectural background, as well as a parent. If interested in being a part of this Committee please reach out to Mr. Mullin.

A motion to add Mr. Christopher Coleman as the Town Manager member on the School Building Committee was made by Ms. Lewis. Seconded by Ms. Jowdy.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

*Vote to approve day trip for High School Juniors to Washington D.C.*

A motion to approve the day trip to Washington, D.C. for the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Exhibition was made by Ms. Jowdy. Seconded by Ms. Plotkin.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

## **Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Jowdy. Seconded by Ms. Lewis.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

## **Meeting adjourned at 6:59pm**

List of Documents and Exhibits Used at Meeting:

- English Language Arts Curriculum Recommendations
- JLCA-Physical Examination and Public Health Screening of Students
- Meeting Minutes of November 4, 2019
- Meeting Minutes of November 7, 2019
- Memo explaining \$800 gift from Martha Jones PTO
- Memo explaining \$8,120 gift from Foundation for Westwood Education
- Memo explaining update of membership to the School Building Committee

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- Memo: Day Trip for High School Juniors to Washington D.C.