

WESTWOOD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Westwood, Massachusetts

SCHOOL START TIMES SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
January 26, 2022

Attendance and Call to Order

The meeting, held both in the Westwood Public Schools District Administration Office Professional Development Room, and remotely¹, was called to order at 3:34pm by Subcommittee Chair Anthony Mullin in-person.

Also present:

Tim Chant, K-12 Wellness Director / Elementary teacher representative (In-person)
Amy Davenport, High School Principal (In-person)
Sanaa Devgan (Gr. 10) High School student representative (Remote)
Marian Donovan, Westwood Teachers Association / Middle School teacher representative (Remote)
Lateefah Franck, METCO Director (Remote)
Matt Gillis, Athletic Director (In-person)
Abby Hanscom, Director of Student Services (Remote, left prior to adjournment)
Chris Hilton, High School teacher / Parent representative (In-person)
Lemma Jn-baptiste, Director of Business and Finance (In-person)
Kathy Lee, High School teacher representative (In-person)
Tammy McGowan, Parent representative (Remote)
Emily Parks, Superintendent of Schools (In-person)
Amanda Phillips, School Committee member (In-person)
Mike Redmon, Middle School Principal (In-person until 3:56pm, then Remote; left prior to adjournment)
Jennifer Ryan Schultz, Parent representative (Remote, left prior to adjournment)
Donna Tobin, Martha Jones School Principal (In-person)

Absent:

Anthony Rodrigues, Parent representative

John Cianciarulo recorded the minutes.

Discussion Items

Orientation to District Transportation

Superintendent Parks and Director of Business and Finance Lemma Jn-baptiste reported that transportation is a major driver in determining school start times and a consultant may need to be considered to assist in the project.

The current yellow bus contract specifies how many buses are used for the year. The district currently contracts for seventeen buses. Each bus costs approximately \$72k per year.

There are legal and School Committee policy requirements related to student transportation. The policy is greater than what is required by law.

School Committee Policy: All kindergarten and grade 1 students are eligible for bus transportation no matter where in town they reside. Students in grades 2 through 5 are eligible if they reside more than one mile from school. In grades 6-12, students residing more than 1-1/2 miles from school are eligible.

Law: Public schools do not have to provide transportation for students in grades 7-12.

¹ Remote meeting held in accordance with an Act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the State of Emergency.

Another impact on bus transportation is those that reside within the walker zone. Families are able to apply for bus transportation and, if there is room, the district will accommodate. There are times, however, when applications do have to be rejected.

Current data on bus riders and routes was reviewed.

The Subcommittee discussed, but made no final determination on, the acceptable length for a bus run. They also discussed methods to more tightly draft bus routes, including no longer permitting walker zone students to ride; and monitoring the actual time needed to complete each run while having students arrive to school on time.

Marian Donovan noted that Xaverian Brothers High School's arrival and dismissal impacts travel times.

Subcommittee Chair Mullin would like data on bus utilization: how many students register versus how many actually ride the bus.

High-Level Draft of Potential Start Time Schedule

High School Principal Amy Davenport and Middle School Principal Michael Redmon were asked to review the bell schedules for their schools and to propose scenarios for start times at 8:00am, 8:30am, and 9:00am. These scenarios were shared with the Subcommittee.

The Subcommittee discussed the earliest reasonable and tolerable start time for elementary school students. Concerns regarding having elementary students waiting for the bus in the dark were expressed.

The Subcommittee also discussed the impact to Boston resident students.

If the district were to pivot to an earlier start time at the elementary schools, there would likely be an increased enrollment for the Extended Day Program.

Community Surveys

Subcommittee Chair Mullin shared surveys from Newton, Norwood, and Winchester that were conducted with staff/teachers, parents, and students.

Working Group(s) to Review/Create Surveys

Working groups were formed to review the community surveys that were shared and to compose drafts for use in Westwood.

- Staff/Teacher: Emily Parks, Tim Chant, Kathy Lee, Donna Tobin
- Parent: Chris Hilton, Lemma Jn-baptiste, Anthony Mullin, Matt Gillis, Tammy McGowan

Amy Davenport and Marian Donovan will recruit students to develop their own survey.

New Business

The Subcommittee discussed hosting a forum for parents about school start times to take place in early March. The surveys would be issued following the forum.

Action Items

MOTION made by Amanda Phillips to approve the Subcommittee meeting minutes of December 1, 2021. Motion seconded by Emily Parks.

Roll-call vote:

Tony Mullin: Yes

Tim Chant: Yes

Amy Davenport: Yes
Sanaa Devgan: Yes
Marian Donovan: Yes
Lateefah Franck: Yes
Matt Gillis: Yes
Abby Hanscom: Absent
Chris Hilton: Yes
Lemma Jn-baptiste: Yes
Kathy Lee: Yes
Tammy McGowan: Yes
Emily Parks: Yes
Amanda Phillips: Yes
Mike Redmon: Absent
Anthony Rodrigues: Absent
Jennifer Ryan Schultz: Absent
Donna Tobin: Yes

Result: 14-0-0 – Approved

Adjournment

MOTION made by Emily Parks to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Amanda Phillips.

Roll-call vote:

Tony Mullin: Yes
Tim Chant: Yes
Amy Davenport: Yes
Sanaa Devgan: Yes
Marian Donovan: Yes
Lateefah Franck: Yes
Matt Gillis: Yes
Abby Hanscom: Absent
Chris Hilton: Yes
Lemma Jn-baptiste: Yes
Kathy Lee: Yes
Tammy McGowan: Yes
Emily Parks: Yes
Amanda Phillips: Yes
Mike Redmon: Absent
Anthony Rodrigues: Absent
Jennifer Ryan Schultz: Absent
Donna Tobin: Yes

Result: 14-0-0 – Approved

The meeting adjourned at 4:36pm.

Documents/Exhibits Used at Meeting

- Community Surveys regarding School Start Times
 - Newton
 - Parents
 - Staff
 - Students
 - Norwood
 - Elementary staff

- Parents
 - Students
 - Winchester
 - Elementary parents
 - Middle/High School staff
 - Students
- District Transportation Information
 - Data on 2021-2022 riders and routes
 - FY'22 Bus costs
 - Excerpts of existing bus contract
- Draft meeting minutes of December 1, 2021 for the Subcommittee's review and approval
- Scenario bell schedules (Current, 8:00am, 8:30am, 9:00am)
 - Middle School
 - High School