

**Westwood Public Schools  
School Committee  
High School Little Theater  
Thursday, November 7, 2019  
7:00pm**

**Present:**

Anthony Mullin, Chairperson  
Josepha Jowdy, Vice Chairperson  
Carol Lewis, Clerk  
Charles Donahue, Committee Member  
Maya Plotkin, Committee Member  
Ayesha Tariq, WHS Student Representative

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 7:00pm  
Pledge of Allegiance**

*Meeting was recorded by Westwood Media Center*

**Superintendent's Report (7:00-7:05)**

FY'21 Budget Process update

Ms. Parks reported. The first meeting of the budget steering committee was held earlier in the week. Mr. Mullin, Ms. Jn-baptiste, and Ms. Parks attended the meeting to represent the school department. Dates for the budget process were reviewed as well as financial materials that Pam Dukeman had presented. There has been a change in the process this year. In the past, there was a long-range planning committee; but that committee has now been disbanded. The plan is now to have the conversations which would have occurred with the long range planning committee to now take place at Select Board meetings. November 18, 2019 is the next meeting for the Select Board to have an initial discussion on capital. Internally, the District is beginning the budget development process. District leadership will be meeting with cost center leaders to talk about their budget requests, review enrollment, etc. There is a focus on special education costs, with discussion on what level of risk to take in the SPED budgeting process. Out-of-district trends are being analyzed to review how we are budgeting for tuition. At the upcoming FinCom meeting on November 12, 2019, Ms. Parks, Ms. Jn-baptiste, and Ms. Plotkin will be at that meeting to present on the building project, FY '20 capital projects and initial thinking about the FY '21 budget.

Upcoming parent programming

On November 18, 2019 at 7pm at the high school, the school department is partnering with Westwood Cares to present "The Secret Life of Teens and Tweens."

On December 12, 2019 at 7pm at the high school, the school department is presenting "Parenting in the Digital Age," presented by Dr. Elizabeth Englander.

## **School Committee Chair and Subcommittee/Liaison Updates (7:05-7:19)**

### Building Project and Community Engagement Plan

- Two forums discussion
- Next Steps

Mr. Mullin asked if there were any thoughts/reflections on the forums. Ms. Plotkin thought it was great turnout. Architects thought the turnout was great. As a school committee, a lot of great feedback was received, some were concerns but a lot of support for this project. The District is in the process of putting together a FAQ which are coming out of the forums. Mr. Donahue thought it was very well run and asked if the consultants and architects had other questions from other towns to add that to the FAQ. Ms. Jowdy asked for an explanation of the next two forums. Ms. Plotkin explained the next two forums will be visioning sessions. These meetings will be 4-5 hours in length and will not be the same format as the past two meetings, looking for visioning with the architects. Need to talk to the OPM with the concern about the length of the meeting. Ms. Parks explained that there will be seven visioning sessions with the educators within the next month. She thought that December 16, 2019 would be an all-day forum with administrators and community members. The format needs to be revised if the time is starting at 7pm. Need to finalize the format with the OPM. Ms. Parks explained that all of the information taken from the posters for both nights will be put together and sent back out to the community. Ms. Lewis asked about setting up sessions for the seniors. Ms. Plotkin will be in touch with the Senior Center and Fox Hill to setup dates to present at both locations. Mr. Donahue wanted to continue with updates in the newspaper; not just have everything on the website because not everyone is online. Ms. Jowdy thought that the newspaper isn't always read and that they should think about a mailing. Ms. Parks wanted to again mention that on the district website there is a big yellow button that, when selected, will take you to the building information page. Ms. Plotkin would like to add a button to submit questions for the FAQ for those who couldn't attend.

### Upcoming School Committee meetings calendar discussion

Mr. Mullin requested that the start time for the December 12, 2019 meeting start at 6:30pm instead of 7:00pm to conduct some administrative items before the public forum begins.

Mr. Mullin also requested that the January 30, 2020 meeting that was originally scheduled if needed as a second budget meeting, be kept in order to discuss the Education Plan.

### Other Liaison reports

Ms. Lewis explained there is a brand new Hale task force. The first meeting was held on October 29, 2019 and it went great. It was very introductory. Hale currently has a \$1.5 million endowment and has a need of \$40 million endowment. They are looking for \$20 million from private philanthropy and \$20 million from public funding. There is no timeline, as they are just starting the conversation. They are well aware of the focus on the building project and will not plan to interrupt that.

Ms. Plotkin explained there will be a SEPAC presentation on November 18, 2019 which will be ADHD parent training session.

## **Public Participation (7:19–7:22)**

A resident is concerned about the social and emotional needs for students and was glad to see that the school start times was in the district plan. Her student is a junior at the high school and now has the privilege of coming in late if he has a free block the first block of the day and has noticed this makes a big difference for him. She wanted to encourage the administration to look into extending this privilege to sophomores and freshmen for their studies/free periods. It could really make a difference as sleep is so important. This could be setup more readily than the late start time proposal and it may be small, but it would show the students that the district is trying to make a change. Mr. Mullin stated that Dover-Sherborn has started this.

## **Discussion Items (7:22-8:16)**

### 2019 MCAS Report (7:22-7:55)

***Due to an odor of natural gas, the School Committee recessed from the Little Theater at 7:35pm and reconvened in the Professional Development Room at 7:45pm.***

Ms. Borchers reported.

The 2019 Next Generation MCAS was administered:

- Math and ELA, grades 3-8, and grade 10
- Science, Technology, and Engineering, grades 5 and 8

These tests are computer-based, aligned to new standards, and include different tasks, expectations, and scoring.

The legacy MCAS was administered for grade 10 biology and was paper-based. This year, students in grade 10 will take the next generation, computer-based test; students in grade 10 will take the legacy paper-based test.

In year two of the new district accountability system, the goal is for proficiency for all students. There are specific targets for improvement.

2017: Baseline (no designation)

2018: "Meeting targets"

2019: "Meeting or exceeding targets"

### *Accountability Highlights*

- District-level score improved from 75% ("Meeting Targets") to 83% ("Meeting or Exceeding Targets").
- High School score improved from 71% ("Meeting Targets") to 91% ("Meeting or Exceeding Targets").
- Middle School score improved from 46% to 55% ("Substantial Progress Toward Meeting Targets")
- There were four commended schools: Deerfield, Downey, Martha Jones, and Sheehan. Westwood had four schools out of 67 schools in the entire state.
- Deerfield was commended in all three areas: high achievement, high growth, and exceeding expectations

Comparison districts' data was reviewed and analyzed. Westwood was "top five" among comparison districts:

English Language Arts: Grades 3, 4, 5, and 6

Math: Grades 3, 4, 5, and 10

Science: Grades 5 and 10

Additionally, over time, scores improved in Math (Grades 6, 7, and 8) and in Science, Technology, and Engineering (Grade 8) from 2018. A focus area is English Language Arts (Grades 7 and 8).

Analysis will continue at the school/department level, including an item analysis for English Language Arts (Grades 7 and 8) and at the school/classroom level; there will be a closer look at subgroup data; and student support will be provided.

#### FY'21 Capital Budget - Initial Discussion (7:55-8:04)

Ms. Jn-baptiste summarized FY'21 requests and provided a five-year look-ahead at the District's capital needs. The request is for \$1.8 Million, though the District may not necessarily receive this. There is an intentional reserve fund for roofing and technology. Looking ahead, there will need to be another network upgrade, replacement of student Chromebooks, teacher laptops, and special projects like upgrading the high school project lab.

In addition, there is a request for investments in vehicles. This is important as the vehicles are aging; the oldest is 14-years-old.

The remainder of the capital budget request is the same as past years'.

Additional requests include an additional \$150,000 to complete Middle School HVAC and controls.

Mrs. Jowdy asked if devices are continually being evaluate and looked at. Chromebooks remain the best choice.

Mr. Donahue asked when the writing curriculum begins and if it is done with Chromebooks. The writing curriculum starts in kindergarten. In kindergarten and grade 1, laptops are used; starting in grade 2, Chromebooks are used.

Mr. Mullin asked about roofing, inquiring about what is in reserve now versus what the true projection will be based on the MSBA building project. About \$400,000 is in reserve right now for roofing.

#### Reauthorization of the Anti-Bullying Plan (8:04-8:06)

Ms. Hanscom reported. Every two years the Anti-Bullying Plan needs to be reauthorized by the School Committee. It is fully compliant with Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations. She recommended opening the document up for the next month for the community to have input and then look at it at the December meeting.

#### Policy Reviews (8:06-8:16)

##### JJH-E- International /Out-of-Country Field Trips - 2nd reading

Ms. Parks stated that, at last month's meeting, there was a question on Section D.4: CORI Checks for Bus Drivers. She went back to the attorney who recommended striking the first sentence and keeping the second sentence. Ms. Jowdy asked if this can be put on the travel company to complete. Westwood continues to look at this when contracting with the companies. Ms. Plotkin suggested adding "any contract with the vendors will complete a background check." This would move to section A which is the trip-ap-

proval section. Ms. Parks will go back to the attorney with these thoughts. Mr. Donahue asked about security. Global security is contacted to check into safety of where students are traveling. Behavior is also very clear and signed off by each student traveling.

JLCA - Physical Examination and Public Health Screening of Students -1st reading

Ms. Parks wanted to update the policy based on feedback from earlier in the year. The update accurately reflects what is being done. Ms. Plotkin would like to get a letter sent home with information about screening, not only website or school newsletter. The letter should list when and what the screening is. The language will be changed to read that a letter will be sent to parents and multiple other means.

**Action Items (8:16-8:22)**

Approval of Minutes: October 10, 2019

A motion was made to approve the October 10, 2019 minutes by Ms. Jowdy. Seconded by Ms. Plotkin.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

Approval of Minutes: October 23, 2019

A motion was made to approve the October 23, 2019 minutes by Ms. Lewis. Seconded by Ms. Jowdy.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

Approval of Minutes: Potential Solar Panel Subcommittee Minutes - June 6, 2019

A motion was made to bring the June 6, 2019 minutes to a full committee vote by Ms. Jowdy. Seconded by Ms. Lewis. A motion was made to approve the June 6, 2019 minutes by the full Committee by Ms. Jowdy. Seconded by Ms. Plotkin.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

Vote to approve ADA Mission, ADAA Goals, ADAB Core Values

A motion was made to wave the third reading of the ADA Mission, ADAA Goals, ADAB Core Values policies by Ms. Plotkin. Seconded by Ms. Jowdy.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

A motion was made to approve the ADA Mission, ADAA Goals, ADAB Core Values policies by Ms. Lewis. Seconded by Ms. Jowdy.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

Vote to approve the Middle School Grade 8 trip to Washington, D.C.

A motion was made to approve the Middle School Grade 8 trip to Washington, D.C. by Ms. Plotkin. Seconded by Mr. Donahue.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

### **Executive Session (8:22-8:23)**

Mr. Mullin read, and Ms. Jowdy made a motion, to go into Executive Session to discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect hereto; and to discuss strategy with respect to litigation, which would have a detrimental effect on the School Committee's litigation position; and not to reconvene in Open Session. Seconded by Ms. Lewis.

Roll Call Vote:

Mr. Donahue: Aye  
Mrs. Jowdy: Aye  
Mrs. Lewis: Aye  
Mrs. Plotkin: Aye  
Mr. Mullin: Aye

Official Vote: Unanimous Approval

Mr. Mullin noted that the Committee would not be returning to public session.

The Committee entered into Executive Session at 8:23pm.

List of Documents and Exhibits Used at Meeting:

- 2019 MCAS Report Memo and Slideshow
- Draft of FY'21-FY'25 Capital Requests
- Westwood Public School Bullying Intervention Plan
- Draft policy JJH-E- International/Out-of-Country Field Trips
- Draft policy JLCA-Physical Examination and Public Health Screening of Students
- Meeting Minutes of October 10, 2019
- Meeting Minutes of October 23, 2019
- Meeting Minutes of Potential Solar Panel Subcommittee on June 6, 2019
- Policy for reading/approval: ADA Mission
- Policy for reading/approval: ADAA Goals
- Policy for reading/approval: ADAB Core Values
- Overnight Trip proposal from M. Redmon for the 8th grade trip to Washington, D.C.