

**Westwood Public Schools  
School Committee  
High School Professional Development Room  
Thursday, January 16, 2020  
7:00pm**

**Present:**

Anthony Mullin, Chairperson  
Joseph Jowdy, Vice Chairperson  
Carol Lewis, Clerk  
Maya Plotkin, Committee Member  
Charles Donahue, 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 at 6:30pm**

Executive Session

Mrs. 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 to reconvene in Open Session. Seconded by Mrs. Lewis.

*Roll-call vote*

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

Result: Unanimous

**Return to Open Session at 7:07pm  
Pledge of Allegiance**

*Meeting was recorded by Westwood Media Center*

**Superintendent's Report (7:07-7:18)**

Budget Update

Ms. Parks reported on the FY'21 budget development process. In a previous School Committee meeting, it was requested to look into expanding the foreign language curriculum to the elementary level or start offering earlier in middle school. She provided some information regarding foreign language in elementary, middle school, and high schools. Five of the twelve TEC schools have some sort of elementary option for foreign language. These options were cost out. The District cannot really afford to do this in the FY'21 budget. A conversation should be done in the spring for long term planning for this. In the short term, could look into providing a tuition-based after school offering. The School Committee would like to move forward with that. Mr. Donahue suggested to publicize the Chinese School that runs at Westwood High on Sundays. Parents could enroll their children to learn Mandarin in this program.

- It is anticipated that there will be no changes in general education staffing in elementary for class sizes.
- A literacy specialist added at the middle school.
- Special Education needs tuition escalation; expand elementary programs.
- Director of Safety and Security position

In meetings with the Budget Steering Committee, a 3.6% increase is anticipated. There are conversations with the Town about additional funding for special education reserve account, additional capital needs at the Thurston, and security projects.

Budget will be presented at the January 30, 2020 School Committee meeting with the Public Budget meeting to be held on February 13, 2020.

Ms. Parks wanted to talk about the situation at the high school last week which had initiated a lockdown. It was de-escalated quickly and determined it was not a threat to safety of the community. It was very frightening experience for students/teachers; and confusing to others. Have had several meetings to debrief and have learned some things that you can't necessarily know from drills. For example, not all students could hear the announcement on the PA, particularly those who were in public places like the cafeteria and library. A visual cue will be added to the protocol like a flashing light, similar to fire alarm, but distinct so they know it means lockdown.

### Student Opportunity Act District Plan

There is a new education funding law. Action needs will be required by the School Committee in the next couple of months. The State will provide district funding to implement research-based strategies that address achievement gap issues. Districts are required to submit their Student Opportunity Act Plan by April 1, 2020. This is a three year plan that needs to be made public for input before the vote by the School Committee. Notification from the Commissioner of Education has been received; instructed to wait to write this plan until two things happen: First, wait until the Governor's budget is released next week to see what Westwood would be entitled to receive; and second, wait until DESE and the Commissioner's Office has released some guidance on writing the plan. Next Thursday at the Massachusetts School Superintendents' meeting, there will be a DESE presentation with templates for writing this plan. Ms. Parks will attend the meeting. This gives about two weeks to draft the plan so it can have public input at

the February 13, 2020 School Committee meeting. The School Committee could vote on this plan at its March 5, 2020 School Committee meeting.

### **School Committee Chair and Subcommittee/Liaison Updates (7:18-7:25)**

#### Review of School Committee and School Building Committee calendar for remainder of School Year

Mr. Mullin wanted to remind all that there are many upcoming meetings. Next Thursday January 23, 2020 at 7pm is a community forum to discuss actual options for the school building project. He encouraged the community to attend this meeting as it is very important to get community input.

#### Building Project and Community Engagement Update

Ms. Plotkin reported. There have been many building project events: Held community forums, presented at PTO meetings, Fox Hill Village and the Senior Center.

Designers have taken the feedback and translated that into different options at different sites. Fifteen options are being presented tomorrow to the School Building Committee and those same options will be presented on the January 23, 2020 community forum being held at 7pm at Thurston Middle School. Each plan will be reviewed against a certain criteria by the Criteria Evaluation Subcommittee. This will narrow the fifteen options to a shorter list of seven or eight options. Work will take place over a couple of months on those seven to eight options to get a recommendation for a final project in June.

#### Other Liaison reports

Mr. Donahue wanted to update. About six months ago, Hannah Gardner spoke at a School Committee meeting about a concern about what is sprayed on the school department fields. The ingredient in question was glyphosate. It was researched what was put on the field. It was found and the spraying of the fields stopped immediately. The DPW now uses a product that doesn't have that ingredient in it.

The Cultural Council has given awards to Martha Jones School PTO, Integrated Preschool, and High School J-Term. The Cultural Council is willing to give money to schools in Westwood.

Mr. Donahue also shared that for the Niche ranking of the top 100 schools in Massachusetts, Westwood High School ranked 55th, Martha Jones ranked 89th, Deerfield ranked 97th.

### **Public Participation (7:25-7:25)**

None

### **Discussion Items (7:25-8:09)**

Discussion of Education Plan Report for MSBA (7:25–8:05)

School Committee meeting – January 16, 2020

Page 3 of 8

Ms. Parks presented.

#### *Purpose of the education program document*

“The MSBA recognizes the importance of education programming, especially as it relates to the effective planning, design, and construction of adaptable school facilities. A comprehensive education program will help inform school designs that are responsive to current teaching and learning practices, while providing flexibility to accommodate future changes in learning environments and educational delivery methods during the useful life of a school facility.”

#### *Purpose of Educational plan*

- Articulate current educational programs in Westwood in order to define number and type of spaces needed in the school
  - Consider the relationship between function and design
  - Consider the need for flexibility in design so that the space can adapt to future changes in programming.
- Give direction to design team
- Evaluate various design options
- MSBA will use this document to determine eligibility for reimbursement for proposed spaces that are not automatically reimbursed in their program (e.g., SPED spaces)

#### *Sections of Narrative.*

There are 23 sections that need to be covered in the document. They include things like policies, teaching methodology, etc. All of these sections lead up to the final section: Articulating the Guiding Principles for Design.

#### *How developed*

- Eleven visioning sessions and workshops with the design team
  - School Committee held community input sessions
  - Workshops with principals, teachers, parents, and district administrators
  - Session with entire elementary faculty
  - Session with special education teachers, service providers, and patrons
  - Session with art and performing arts teachers
  - Information for the Strategy for District Improvement, curriculum review reports, etc.
- Toured other schools
  - Sunita Williams, Needham, MA
  - Clyde Brown, Millis, MA
  - Woodland, Milford, MA
- Input from School Committee

#### *Proposed changes*

- Grade-level “neighborhoods” around extended learning spaces and flexible small group space
- Number of classrooms (in order to implement class size policies)
- A preconceived library/media space that is a “learning commons”
- Dedicated space for art, music and STEAM

Ms. Plotkin clarified that we can put in as many classrooms as we want, this is just regarding reimbursement from MSBA.

### *Proposed Changes*

- Reconceive cafeteria to include flexible seating options, visually connected but acoustically separate dining spaces
- Adjacencies between performance space (cafeteria) and music instructional space
- Adjacencies between library/media, STEAM (Coding), and art
- Purposefully designed space for programs such as Adaptive PE, OT, PT
- Location of district-wide SPED programs
- Size of the gym? There have been conversations with all stakeholders regarding gym space and fields; Westwood Basketball Association, Youth Soccer, Youth Lacrosse, Little League, Softball, the Athletic Director at high school, Recreation Department. A 6000 sq. ft gym is reimbursable from MSBA. Could possibly adjust to bigger size and have two cross courts.
- Full service kitchen? Not proposing this in the educational plan. Value if space is large enough that in the future would want to install a full service kitchen. The District currently has a centralized kitchen and then food is sent out to the elementary schools.
- Relationship between SEL and Wellness goals and desire for outdoor learning opportunities, quiet spaces, daylight, etc. Mrs. Jowdy asked if outside learning was reimbursable? The District will need to confirm if it is.
- Potential to change location of Extended School Year and Summer Enrichment
- Potential to change number of Extended Day sites
- Common elementary start times across district?
- Security features
- Sustainability
  - Related to education program: composting, etc.

### *Next Steps*

Between now and next School Committee meeting on January 30

- Gather any additional feedback internally and from School Committee
- Feedback from design team
- Post draft for public review
- Finalize understanding of guiding principles

School Committee vote to approve Educational Program for submission to MSBA.

### Q2 Financial Report (8:05-8:09)

Ms. Jn-baptise reported. Spending rate very close in line to last year.

- 44.8% is committed/spent this year
- 44.4% was last year

Salary makes up 80% of the budget:

- 37.3% expended salaries this year, compared to 37.2% last year.

Non-Salary expenses, SPED exceeding expenses. Contracted services will potentially exceed by 26%. Providing services to students in which we may not have the staff for internally. The Extended School Year also will contribute to exceeding the budget.

**Action Items (8:09–8:19)**

*Vote to approve new School Building Committee Members*

A motion was made to approve new School Building Committee Members Brian Bayer and Kate Scales by Ms. Jowdy. Seconded by Ms. Plotkin.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

*Vote to authorize School Start Times Sub-Committee*

A motion was made to authorize a School Start Times Sub-Committee by Ms. Plotkin. Seconded by Mr. Donahue.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

*Vote to approve policy JLCA - Physical Examination and Public Health Screening of Students*

A motion was made to approve the policy JLCA-Physical Examination and Public Health Screening of Students by Ms. Plotkin. Seconded by Ms. Jowdy.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

*Vote to accept gift of \$150 from Lueders Environmental*

A motion was made to accept the gift of \$150 from Lueders Environmental by Ms. Plotkin. Seconded by Mr. Donahue.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

*Vote to accept a gift of \$1,500 from Needham Bank for the METCO Program*

A motion was made to accept a gift of \$1,500 from Needham Bank for the METCO Program by Ms. Jowdy. Seconded by Ms. Plotkin.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

*Vote to accept a gift of \$15,000 from MEDITECH*

A motion was made to accept a gift of \$15,000 from MEDITECH by Ms. Lewis. Seconded by Ms. Jowdy.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

*Vote to accept a grant of \$500 from the Exxon Mobil Educational Alliance*

A motion was made to accept a grant of \$500 from the Exxon Mobil Educational Alliance by Ms. Lewis. Seconded by Ms. Jowdy.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

*Vote to reauthorize the Bullying Intervention Plan*

A motion was made to reauthorize the Bullying Intervention Plan by Ms. Jowdy. Seconded by Ms. Lewis.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

*Vote to approve an out-of-state trip to Mt. Tecumseh, Waterville Valley, NH*

A motion was made to approve an out-of-state trip to Mt. Tecumseh, Waterville Valley, NH by Ms. Plotkin. Seconded by Ms. Jowdy.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

*Approval of Minutes: December 9, 2019*

A motion was made to approve the December 9, 2019 minutes by Ms. Lewis. Seconded by Ms. Jowdy.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

*Approval of Minutes: December 12, 2019 (Business Meeting)*

A motion was made to approve the December 12, 2019 business meeting minutes by Ms. Lewis. Seconded by Ms. Jowdy.

Official Vote: Unanimous approval

*Approval of Minutes: December 12, 2019 (Community Forum)*

A motion was made to approve the December 12, 2019 community forum minutes by Ms. Lewis. Seconded by Mr. Donahue.

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 8:19pm**

List of Documents and Exhibits Used at Meeting:

- Budget Update
- School Committee and School Building Committee calendar
- Education Plan Report for MSBA
- Q2 Financial Report
- JLCA-Physical Examination and Public Health Screening of Students
- Memo explaining \$150 gift from Lueders Environmental
- Memo explaining \$1,500 gift from Needham Bank
- Memo explaining \$15,000 gift from MEDITECH
- Memo explaining \$500 grant from Exxon Mobil Educational Alliance
- Bullying Intervention Plan
- Memo: Out-of-state trip to Mt. Tecumseh, Waterville Valley, NH.
- Meeting Minutes of December 9, 2019
- Meeting Minutes of December 12, 2019 Business Meeting
- Meeting Minutes of December 12, 2019 Community Forum