

WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, June 5, 2023 at 6:30 PM
School Committee Conference Room,
Case House, 89 Wellesley St., Weston, MA 02493

This meeting was streamed in real time via Zoom. Recording may be found here:
<https://cloud.castus.tv/vod/weston/video/648037f297a52f000810f849?page=HOME>

Questions or comments? Contact: SchoolCommittee@weston.org -
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DOCUMENTS USED

- ['23 Year End STAR Data for Literacy and Math](#)
- [Ash Baird Memorial Proposal to School Committee - June 2023](#)
- [Bus Video Policy-DRAFT](#)
- [PTO Presentation 2023](#)
- [Table A K12 Enrollment Oct 1 2022 - Updated 06.05.2023](#)
- [Updated Subcommittee Assignments and Discussion](#)

ATTENDING PANELISTS

School Committee: Mr. Kenneth Newberg (Chair), Ms. Maija Circulis-Gooch (Vice Chair), Mr. Jeffrey Lucas (member), and Ms. Cortney Leung (Student Representative to the School Committee). Absent: Ms. Attia Linnard, Mr. Adam Newman, and Ms. Keitrice Johnson (METCO Representative to the School Committee)

Also attending: Dr. Midge Connolly (Superintendent), Dr. Kimo Carter (Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning), Ms. Sheri Matthews (Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations), Dr. Lee McCanne (Director of Technology and Libraries), Mr. Derrek Joyce (Secretary to the School Committee), Ms. Tracy Manousaridis (WPS Elementary Mathematics Specialist), Ms. Donna Guzman (WPS Elementary Reading and Writing Specialist), Mr. John Power (WHS Women's Varsity Soccer Coach), Ms. Gail Palmer (WPS PTO President), Ms. Stephanie Goldstein (WPS PTO Vice President), and Ms. Kate Dickie (WEEFC Chair)

OPENING BUSINESS

Chairman's Report

With a quorum of the Weston School Committee present, Mr. Newberg calls the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and provides an overview of the meeting's agenda. Mr. Newberg advises that the School Committee has reached a tentative agreement with the WEA, subject to ratification

by both parties. He then congratulates the recent graduates of WHS, who had their ceremony Friday, June 2, 2023.

Superintendent's Report (02:35)

Dr. Connolly opens by congratulating Jamy Gaynor (Director of Health Services) and Emma Kwon (Elementary Library Media Specialist) for recent accolades. She then advises that WMS students have departed for their annual Washington D.C. field trip and wishes them well. Dr. Connolly concludes by noting recent and upcoming events at the elementary schools and reminding everyone that the end of the school year is fast approaching. Dr. Connolly does not provide Weston High School updates, as these were provided by Ms. Leung.

Subcommittee Reports (05:03)

Ms. Leung provides updates regarding recent and upcoming events within the high school. During the report, Ms. Leung announces that between the recent Spring Fling, Cupcake Challenge, and Kids Night Out students were able to donate over \$6,000 to Camp No Limits.

Public Comment (06:07)

Mr. Newberg opens by reminding attendees the purpose of Public Comment and sets expectations regarding behavior. Weston resident Kristin Barbieri thanks Dr. Connolly and the staff of WPS for June 2's graduation ceremony and suggests moving an existing half day to graduation day to allow for more flexibility around timing of the event. Prior to proceeding with Major Business, Mr. Newberg announces the committee will be hearing a request for a memorial tree and stone; the presentation was a time-sensitive and late addition to the agenda.

MAJOR BUSINESS

Elementary Academic Assessment: STAR Data (9:05)

Ms. Manousaridis and Ms. Guzman jointly present the elementary STAR data from SY 2022–23. Ms. Manousaridis begins by explaining that STAR is a screening tool that is used as an initial diagnostic for students. She then briefly mentions the other tools WPS utilizes in elementary education. Following this introduction, they each independently present the SY 2022–23 for their respective subjects (Ms. Manousaridis reporting on mathematics and Ms. Guzman reporting on literacy) in the following format: semesterly percentile changes, annual percentile changes, areas of consideration, and concluding with recommendations for next steps. It was recognized that the excellence of our lower elementary schools is being reflected in the data but that there are opportunities to improve student growth at the Field School. One proposal to improve growth included adding a fulltime ELA interventionist at the Field School to match the lower elementary schools. During the presentation, Dr. Carter highlights how well WPS compares to national averages.

Tree and Stone Memorial for Ash Baird (55:56)

Mr. Power requests that the committee consider approving a memorial honoring the late Ms. Ash Baird, a member of WHS Class of 2018 who passed away that year. Following a tribute to Ms. Baird, Mr. Power explains that the soccer team would like to plant a Japanese maple tree next to Procter Field with a small engraved stone in her honor. He discusses the typical growth of the tree, which the team has already purchased, and that all funding would come from private sources. After Mr. Power clarifies logistics for the committee and Ms. Matthews, **Ms.**

Circulis-Gooch motions to approve the WHS Women's Varsity Soccer team's request to plant/establish the memorial to Ms. Baird, subject to the final approval of district administration; Mr. Lucas seconds the motion. The Weston School Committee unanimously approves this motion.

Shared Responsibilities for Student Representative to the School Committee (01:14:40)

Ms. Leung proposes that the responsibilities of the Student Representative to the School Committee be divided between two students. She explains that, under this model, the primary representative would be a Senior at WHS and the secondary would be a Junior; this would allow for a more seamless transition at the student level. As no Weston School Committee members raised concerns when he prompted, **Mr. Newberg declares unanimous consent to approve the request as a pilot program.**

PTO Year-End Report (01:18:47)

Ms. Palmer opens by thanking Dr. Connolly and the Facilities team for all of their hard work for graduation. She then provides a summary of financial sourcing for PTO. Ms. Palmer provides a summary of current and historic membership metrics and advertises the open membership drive. The remainder of her report is dedicated to summarizing many of the PTO events this year from all schools. She concludes by playing a video showcasing some of these events. Mr. Newberg thanks Ms. Palmer, and the entire PTO organization for its tireless efforts to support the teachers and to be welcoming to all families regardless of political beliefs.

WEEFC Year-End Report (01:45:56)

Ms. Dickie opens by disclosing to the committee that this was the most successful fundraising year for WEEFC in decades. She provides a summary of WEEFC grants paid to date and pending grants for the remainder of the school year. She highlights some of the uses for the grants and discusses WEEFC's Star Award program. Ms. Dickie advises WEEFC also received the largest gift in its history this year. She summarizes the areas of study grants have funded and concludes by discussing next steps and future data collection for WEEFC. Mr. Newberg congratulates Ms. Dickie and the WEEFC board for a successful year and accepts the report with gratitude.

Preliminary Class Sectioning Projections (01:57:15)

As of June 5, 2023, grades K - 7 is projected to have an average of roughly 20 students per section. The eighth grade will have approximately 22 students.

Dr. Carter highlighted that the incoming kindergarten cohort is smaller than normal and that the small 5th grade cohort will be transitioning to 6th grade this coming school year. It is noted that the current kindergarten class is unusually large at 173 students (compared to recent averages hovering between 140 - 150). As of June 5, 2023, there are approximately 115 kindergarteners registered to start in the fall which is similar to the rising fifth grade class. Dr. Connolly confirms that the kindergarten class size will have some impact on staffing at that level.

Dr. Carter explains that the high school scheduling is proving more difficult than in previous years, but more definitive information will be presented at a later meeting for school committee approval of under- and over-subscribed courses per committee policy.

Proposed School Bus Safety Policy EEA (02:04:10)

Ms. Matthews explains that this policy is one the district has needed to implement; however, it was previously tabled due to the COVID pandemic. She advises that she would like to add the policy to the student handbook as well. Ms. Matthews explains the district has the capability to record audio on the buses but does not do so as family's have not received notice of this; this policy would provide said notice. She discusses how the current technology works and capabilities of the district's next buses. Per Weston School Committee [Policy BGB](#), the committee will revisit this proposal at the next scheduled meeting.

SY23-24 Tuition and Building Fee Rental/Use Schedule (02:12:42)

Ms. Matthews explains changes to fee schedule from FY'23. Dr. McCanne clarifies that Chromebook charger rates have gone up to \$29 per replacement. Ms. Matthews notes that she will update this line in the fee schedule, if the committee motions to do so. Mr. Newberg requests that the allowable musician tutor hourly rate, paid directly to the instructors, be increased to \$39.50 to more closely match current wage rates and ensure the continued availability of instructors for our students. Mr. Newberg also confirms that the district will provide financial help to those who need to be able to access these private instructors on similar terms as direct-pay students.

The committee discusses potential avenues for revenue to offset increased costs. Some items discussed: increasing preschool tuition rates to be better in line with surrounding offerings and to decrease the effective public subsidy of preschool where demand far exceeds the number of available spots for neurotypical students, reducing fuel cost and emissions from buses, and exploring WHS student parking fees as neighboring districts have implemented in an attempt to best utilize the existing spaces and encourage carpooling. Implementing a bus fee to encourage families to commit to public transport is also discussed; however, the committee decides to table the discussion subject to further review.

As a motion to approve the fee schedule is introduced, Ms. Christine Flashner (Chair of the Board, Children's Center of Weston) inquired into whether the CCW three-year contract was being approved without further discussion. Mr. Newberg confirms that their contract is separate from the fee structure. Ms. Flashner requests that the contract approval be moved to a later meeting because further language needs to be discussed with the administration. The Weston School Committee agrees. **Ms. Circulis-Gooch motions to approve the fee schedule, subject to the amendments listed above; Mr. Newberg seconds the motion. The Weston School Committee unanimously approves this motion.**

OTHER BUSINESS

SY23-24 Member Subcommittee / Advisory Assignments (03:06:08)

Mr. Newberg discusses changes made to the assignments since the reorganizational meeting - with Ms. Circulis-Gooch being assigned as the PTO Representative and some other minor changes to subcommittee assignments. He then suggests having the full committee serve on the collective bargaining subcommittee on an as-needed basis or striking the subcommittee entirely; Dr. Connolly suggests keeping it as a precautionary measure. Mr. Newberg advises that he has met with MASC representative Dorothy Presser to finish the policy update project he started in FY23. **Mr. Newberg motions to approve the subcommittee / advisory assignments as presented; Mr. Lucas seconds the motion. The Weston School Committee unanimously approves this motion.**

Consent Agenda (03:17:45)

Mr. Newberg moves to the consent agenda and asks if any items need to be removed for individual discussion. The Children's Center of Weston (CCW) Rental and Use Contract is removed as noted in the minutes regarding the SY23-24 Tuition and Building Fee Rental/Use Schedule. **Mr. Newberg declares unanimous consent to approve the consent agreement as presented, including payment of Payroll Warrant 4523 for \$1,595,178.80, Approval of Student Club Proposal: Cook to Connect, Bus Driver's Memorandum of Agreement for July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2025, and School Committee minutes for May 9, 2023.**

NEXT REGULAR MEETING's AGENDA TOPICS — May 1, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in Boston, MA.

- Music Program Internal Review (Info)
- Anti-Bullying Policies/Prevention Plan Update (Info)
- Policy Updates (Info/Vote)
- School Committee Meeting Calendar for SY23-24 (Vote)
- School Committee Year-End Review (Info)

ADJOURNMENT TO EXECUTIVE SESSION (03:23:23)

Following the motion made by Mr. Newberg and seconded by Ms. Cirulis-Gooch, the Weston School Committee voted by roll call vote at 9:53 p.m. to adjourn to executive session and not return to open session for the purpose of conducting strategy sessions in preparation for

negotiations with nonunion personnel as doing so in open session would have a detrimental effect on bargaining position. Ms. Cirulis-Gooch votes aye, Mr. Lucas votes aye, and Mr. Newberg votes aye.