

WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, October 2, 2023 at 7:00 PM

This meeting was held in real time via Zoom. Recording may be found here:
<https://cloud.castus.tv/vod/weston/video/651c39f6c9716400088d3415?page=HOME>

Questions or comments? Contact: SchoolCommittee@weston.org -
www.westonschools.org

DOCUMENTS USED

- [Superintendent's Report](#)
- [Metrowest Survey Results and Recommendations Presentation](#) [Please view in presentation mode]
 - [Metrowest Survey Data](#)
- [Annual Budget Guidelines](#)
- [School Committee Policy KFB](#)
- [School Committee Policy GCBA](#)

ATTENDING PANELISTS

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

Also attending: Dr. Karen Zaleski (Interim Superintendent), Mr. Stephen Nembirkow (Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations), Mr. Derrek Joyce (Secretary to the School Committee), Mr. Johan Coisman (Weston Middle School Student), and Mr. Mitch Finnegan (Director of Wellness Education).

OPENING BUSINESS

Chairman's Report (00:00)

With a quorum of the Weston School Committee present, Mr. Newberg calls the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. He explains that Ms. Cirulis-Gooch is present; however, she is in the next room presenting for the Community Preservation Committee (CPC). Mr. Newberg then invites attendees to sign up for public comment and reviews the agenda for the evening. He thanks and congratulates the Weston Education Enrichment Fund Committee (WEEFC) for their successful event over the weekend, which raised over \$125,000. He concludes by providing a schedule for the preliminary superintendent screening and interview subcommittees' meetings.

As Ms. Cirulis-Gooch is presenting for the CPC, Mr. Newberg provides her subcommittee report, noting an upcoming event for the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) and the council's recent partnership with Cartwheel.

Superintendent Report (03:42)

Dr. Zaleski takes a moment to recognize Mr. Coisman for being chosen by the Society for Science as one of 30 finalists that were invited to Washington, D.C., from Oct. 28 to Nov. 2 to showcase their projects. She then highlights Weston Public Schools' high rankings on Niche.com, district leadership receiving professional development at the REDI (Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) conference, the Middle School Back-to-School Night, High School events, and the Food Services department.

Subcommittee Reports (9:11)

Ms. Leung provides updates regarding recent and upcoming events within the high school, including recent athletics successes and Dr. Zaleski's visit to the High School. Ms. Johnson advertises upcoming BWMPPO events. Mr. Newman advises there is an upcoming Sustainability Committee meeting and notes the School Committee will be involved in the ongoing discussion regarding electric buses.

Public Comment (11:25)

No attendees wished to speak.

MAJOR BUSINESS

Society for Science Student Recognition: Johan Coisman

This portion of the agenda was discussed during Dr. Zaleski's Superintendent Report.

Metrowest Survey Results and Recommendations (11:42)

Note: Ms. Cirulis-Gooch joins the meeting during this presentation.

In light of the technical difficulties that occurred during this meeting, Mr. Joyce explains how viewers at home and those present can view Mr. Finnegan's presentation. Mr. Finnegan opens by providing background information regarding the Metrowest Adolescent Survey. He then goes through the data gathered through the survey with supplemental information provided by Dr. Zaleski, discussing topics such as mental health, substance abuse, connectedness and support in school and at home, and how Weston Public Schools is addressing areas of concern.

To ensure everyone is aware, Mr. Newberg advised the district previously hired additional mental health counselors using grant funds during COVID, but then added them to the general operating budget to signify their long term role within the district. Ms. Cirulis-Gooch asks if there are other forms of prevention the district should explore beyond the universal; Mr. Finnegan

recommends health education beginning at the elementary level and enhanced curriculum. Dr. Zaleski speaks to Mr. Finnegan's suggestions. Ms. Johnson asks if the survey results differentiate between marijuana use and vaping; Mr. Finnegan advises it does not but the organization that sponsors the survey is currently refining the questions. Ms. Linnard discusses her opinions regarding a few points of data, specifically her joy that many students feel connected to adults in their lives and suspicion that there is more substance use than reported. She then requests data and success stories from a public school district that has more learning hours dedicated to health education. Mr. Lucas asks if there is information regarding how social media affects mental health; Mr. Finnegan confirms there is. Ms. Leung expresses concern for her fellow students suffering with the issues presented in the survey silently. Mr. Newman questions what the strategy is between surveys and what other types of data will be collected; Mr. Finnegan responds with other sources that will be tapped. Mr. Zou is surprised by the results, implying the situation is not as dire by citing anecdotal data; Mr. Finnegan reminds viewers that the data is collected anonymously.

Budget Update Presentation: FY25 Budget Drivers, Remaining ESSER Funds, Priority Based Budgeting Pilot (1:04:54)

Mr. Nembirkow advises that the ESSER I grant has closed and all outstanding payments are in the process of being issued. In response to Ms. Cirulis-Gooch's question, he clarifies that the \$110,000 being shown as unspent has in fact been used. He advises some areas of the ESSER III grant were reallocated to reflect district needs, but there are still funds available for use. Mr. Nembirkow turns to budget drivers for FY25, highlighting recurring costs such as interventionists and nurses, requiring less COVID testing and prevention supplies, and technology.

Mr. Nembirkow advises that he made presentations regarding the Priority Based Budgeting Pilot to the administrative team and department heads to discuss rollout. He stresses the goal of this exercise is to streamline data collection and make the budget process more inclusive. He then provides a summary of the budgeting process. Dr. Zaleski notes that they are providing ongoing training to all involved to ensure they have the support they need. Mr. Nembirkow explains the culture shift they hope will stem from this budget process, namely the shift in providing data when asking for items with financial implications. Dr. Zaleski and Mr. Nembirkow outline the forms used by the administrative team to outline their budgetary needs. Mr. Newman suggests including qualitative projections for FY26 and beyond.

Annual Budget Guidelines Discussion (1:29:48)

Mr. Newberg thanks Ms. Cirulis-Gooch and Mr. Newman for their work on the budget guidelines offline. **Ms. Linnard motions to approve the annual budget guidelines for FY25 as submitted in the committee's meeting materials**; Mr. Lucas seconds the motion. The motion carries with Ms. Cirulis-Gooch voting aye, Ms. Linnard voting aye, Mr. Lucas voting aye, Mr. Newman voting aye, and Mr. Newberg voting aye.

All Committee Meeting, Financial Summit Designated Speaker (1:30:27)

Mr. Newberg explains the role of the Designated Speaker at the All Committee Meeting and Financial Summit and outlines what he would like to have presented. **Ms. Linnard motions to appoint Mr. Newberg as the School Committee representative at the Weston All Committee Meeting and Financial Summit;** Mr. Lucas seconds the motion. The motion carries with Ms. Cirulis-Gooch voting aye, Ms. Linnard voting aye, Mr. Lucas voting aye, Mr. Newman voting aye, and Mr. Newberg voting aye.

Second Read/Revisions: Policy KFB - Management and Use of Tennis Courts (01:31:23)

Ms. Cirulis-Gooch advises the only substantive change to the policy from the previous meeting is that she removed the sentence regarding additional revenue as discussed. **Ms. Linnard motions to approve Policy KFB as amended and submitted in the committee's meeting materials;** Mr. Lucas seconds the motion. The motion carries with Ms. Cirulis-Gooch voting aye, Ms. Linnard voting aye, Mr. Lucas voting aye, Mr. Newman voting aye, and Mr. Newberg voting aye.

CONTINUED BUSINESS

Cont. Discussion Administrator Compensation Band Policy Revisions (01:32:16)

Mr. Newberg thanks Mr. Newman for his work on the policy offline, as he implemented the edits discussed at the previous meeting. **Ms. Cirulis-Gooch motions to approve Policy GCBA as amended and submitted in the committee's meeting materials;** Ms. Linnard seconds the motion. The motion carries with Ms. Cirulis-Gooch voting aye, Ms. Linnard voting aye, Mr. Lucas voting aye, Mr. Newman voting aye, and Mr. Newberg voting aye.

OTHER BUSINESS

Consent Agenda (01:33:42)

Mr. Newberg moves to the consent agenda and lists the individual items up for approval. **Ms. Linnard motions the consent agenda, namely to approve the meeting minutes for the Weston School Committee's September 11, 2023 meeting as submitted; to approve the warrant number 1324 for payment for services and materials actually received by the District; to recognize the following student clubs: Community Engagement Club, Biology in Practice, Anything Goes Magazine Club (subject to appropriate adult supervision and containing age-appropriate content); and to ratify the side letter of agreement between the Weston School Committee and the Weston Educators' Association relating to adjustments to club stipends for the 2023-2024 School Year as found in Schedule C of the Collective Bargaining Agreement;** Mr. Lucas seconds the motion. The motion carries with Ms. Cirulis-Gooch voting aye, Ms. Linnard voting aye, Mr. Lucas voting aye, Mr. Newman voting aye, and Mr. Newberg voting aye.

NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA TOPICS — October 16, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

- Student Recognition: HS Video Presentation
- Update on Superintendent Search
- Governance Subcommittee Update
- 22-23 SY District MCAS Report
- SY23-24 Student Enrollment Report
- SY22-23 Year End Fiscal Report, Free Cash, and Q1 Report

ADJOURNMENT (01:37:20)

Following the motion made by Ms. Linnard and seconded by Mr. Lucas, the Weston School Committee votes at 8:37 p.m. to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Cirulis-Gooch votes aye, Ms. Linnard votes aye, Mr. Lucas votes aye, Mr. Newman votes aye, and Mr. Newberg votes aye.