

WHITMAN-HANSON REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of December 14, 2016

Held at the Whitman-Hanson Regional High School

Meeting convened: 7:02 p.m.

Meeting adjourned: 9:18 p.m.

Members present: Robert Hayes, Daniel Cullity, Robert Trotta, Robert O'Brien, Jr.,
Steve Bois, Christopher Howard, Michael Jones

Members absent: Alexandria Taylor, Frederick Small, Kevin Lynam

Administrators present: Dr. Ruth Gilbert-Whitner, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Patrick Dillon, Asst. Superintendent of Schools
Ellen Stockdale, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Staff Development
Dr. John Queally, Administrator for Special Education and PPS
Christine Suckow, Director of Business Services
Chad Peters, Director of Technology Services

Chair Hayes brought the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and announced the meeting was being broadcast live and recorded.

Chair Hayes encouraged the community to attend the regularly scheduled School Committee meeting on January 11, 2017 as there will be an initial discussion regarding the FY2018 District Budget.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

November 9, 2016 School Committee meeting minutes

VOTE: Mr. Cullity motioned; Mr. Howard seconded; voted to approve the November 9, 2016 School Committee meeting minutes, as presented. 6-0-1. Mr. Bois abstained.

STUDENT ADVISORY REPORT

Thomas Long was not present to report. However, Chair Hayes announced student activity reports will be presented by high school English teacher and National Honor Society Advisor, Ellen Galambos, for donations to the food pantry. Ellen Stockdale will also report on elementary student activities.

Ellen Galambos, along with high school student Bryce Pulkinen, Vice President of the National Honor Society, presented checks in the amount of \$1,250 each to both the Whitman and Hanson Food Pantries. The funds were raised at the October 22, 2016 Miles for Meals 5k event held at the high school.

Ellen Stockdale shared recent student activities at the elementary level with the Committee. She shared news of the implementation of Know Atom and discussed the work being done to improve narrative and informative writing. Also, students are learning about immigration and what it means to be an American by doing school projects on their own heritage.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

21st Century Grant Program and Funding

Dr. Whitner reported on the status of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Grant. The grant is “to support the implementation of additional learning time through out-of-school time (OST) programming and/or through an expanded day referred to as Expanded Learning Time or ELT. Programming is designed to help close proficiency/opportunity gaps, increase student engagement, support social and emotional learning, and promote college and career readiness and success.” Dr. Whitner added that grants are seed money to supplement until a district can fund the program. If the program is to continue, Whitman-Hanson will need to now take responsibility for the program.

High School Principal, Jeff Szymaniak, provided a brief history of when the CCLC grant was first awarded (seven years ago) and the impact it has had on students attending the Regional High School. The grant provides \$105,000 to fund an after-school program and transportation for high school students. Mr. Szymaniak reported the high school dropout rate has decreased from 3.9% to 0.2% since its inception.

Maureen Leonard, Program Coordinator, discussed the details of the program. Students remain after school and attend enrichment classes that include after school academics, support with homework from the regular school day, and a variety of personal health and nutrition skills programs, culinary, art, and physical workout classes. The program also offers a credit recovery for at risk students or students who are not on pace to graduate. In attending Individual Education Plans (IEP) meetings, Mrs. Leonard assists in setting up a success plan for the student and acts as Family Liaison, a funded position under the grant. Approximately 40% of the students have IEPs.

High school senior, Olivia Affannato, discussed how the program has helped her through her high school career, how the program has taught her to build relationships with peers, and her plans to attend college next fall. Miss Affannato was also chosen to sit on a panel discussion at Bridgewater State University to share concerns with the opioid epidemic and the student body.

Mrs. Leonard reported there are forty students in the program this year. A short video production was shown at the School Committee meeting that introduced the staff and teachers in the after school program and highlighted the students engaged in the program.

Mr. Szymaniak reported on other high school student activities. He commended the students for being thoughtful and community supporters. Penny Days raised over \$2,400 for My Brother's Keeper to buy toys for children. Also, high school student, Marc Benjamino, traveled to Arlington Cemetery to place wreaths on fallen soldiers graves.

Dr. Whitner re-iterated the importance of the school district's responsibility to sustain grant-funded programs as the funding sources change. In addition, traditional programs are not always sufficient for every student success. It is the district's responsibility to promote student success. This also ties into the strategic plan and update of curriculum directors' synchronization of the curriculum throughout each grade level.

Strategic Plans/Goals Progress

Dr. Whitner reported on the status of the Strategic Plan. The administrative team has been reviewing the Planning for Success model and action plans, and incorporating the RADAR project, which links

data reports to Whitman-Hanson Regional School District and compares the data to other districts throughout the state. The data will be used to improve student success. Dr. Whitner reported a meeting was held in November with a representative from the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) RADAR program. A review of the three pillars of success: social emotional learning, aligning PK-12 curriculum, and safe and supportive schools, as well as a review of the action plans took place. The relationship of the plan to budgetary impact was also discussed. Dr. Whitner added the goals of the District are directly linked to the Strategic Plan and provides focus to move forward with student success, Every Child, Every Day.

Safe and Supportive Schools Grant

Dr. Queally reported the District was awarded a \$20,000 grant under the Safe and Supportive School Grant. Although the District applied for the grant last year, it was not awarded to Whitman-Hanson. The District is pleased that this year, the grant funding was awarded. The funding will be used to build two teams of seven staff members to work with the elementary and middle schools to self-assess where Whitman-Hanson is the social and emotional learning needs of students and identify areas of improvement and how to move forward in the Strategic Plan aspect of social and emotional learning.

Safety Drill at Whitman-Hanson Regional High School

Dr. Dillon reported that on December 27, 2016, in partnership with local safety officials and first responders, an emergency management safety drill will be conducted at the high school. Dr. Dillon provided details of the drill.

PISA

Dr. Whitner announced the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District was invited by Commissioner Mitchell Chester of the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to participate in OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development) Test for schools, based on PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment). The state of Massachusetts has participated in the assessment in the past. Mrs. Ellen Stockdale and Mr. Jeffrey Szymaniak provided details about the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation Development) assessment. The three-hour on line assessment is taken by fifteen year old high school students only. The test encompasses how students use critical thinking, students' approach to learning, student engagement, and other things not typically tested with results. Mrs. Stockdale added that part of the process will be to participate in a summer regional meeting with other school districts to identify strategies on how to improve student success and network over the next three years. Mr. Szymaniak added the assessment will be administered between the March and June MCAS testing. Dr. Whitner reported there is no cost to the District to participate.

October 1 Enrollment

Technology Director, Chad Peters, presented the October 1 Enrollment summary and statistics as certified by the DESE. The October 1 Student Enrollment Count as of October 1, 2016 is 4,044 students enrolled in the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District. The enrollment figure includes outside placement students. Mr. Peters reported a decrease of 66 students from 2015, or, -1.61%. The reports are broken down by town, school, and grade and are used in the assessment to the towns. The number of students qualifying for the meal benefit program has grown to just under 30%. Also the number of English Language Learner (ELL) students has increased as well. Dr. Whitner reported since the October I enrollment report was certified, an additional eight English Language Learner

students have been enrolled. Mr. Bois commented that although enrollment is slightly down, the need for programs for student success still exists.

Christine Suckow discussed how student enrollment drives the budget assessment to the towns. The Town of Hanson would decrease \$162,000 (1618 students at 40.5%) and the town of Whitman would increase \$162,000 (2382 students at 59.5%). Mrs. Suckow identified some of the items impacting the FY2018 budget such as retirements and group health insurance under GIC and Plymouth County. She went on to report on the district budget.

Budget Report

Christine Suckow reviewed the YTD expenditure and revenue reports illustrating original appropriations, transfers and/or adjustments and year to date expenditures, encumbrances and available budget used to date. Mrs. Suckow discussed revenue sources, when the District could anticipate receipt of charter school and transportation reimbursement and reported that the anticipated interest revenue is slightly up. Dr. Whitner presented a memo from the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools (MARS) memo contacting districts that contributed to the legal fund two years ago when the Patrick administration proposed the 9C cuts to Chapter 71 Regional Transportation Reimbursement. Because Governor Patrick's administration did not include regional transportation in the 9C cuts, MARS did not take legal action. The memo from MARS requests that districts notify them if they would like to have their contribution returned, (in the case of Whitman-Hanson Regional School District the amount is \$500) or have MARS retain the funds should other legal issues arise. The School Committee must respond no later than February 1, 2017. There was a brief discussion after a motion made by Dan Cullity and seconded by Steve Bois. Some members opined the money should remain with MARS to fund future legal special initiatives. Mr. Bois commented that although \$500 may seem a minimal amount, the District could use the money. A vote ensued to have the money returned the District, but it did not pass. The \$500 from the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District will be retained in the MARS Legal Fund. Dr. Whitner will send the response and vote of the School Committee to MARS.

VOTE: Mr. Cullity motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to have the \$500 contribution to MARS Legal Fund special initiative to challenge the 9C cuts to Chapter 71 Regional Transportation Reimbursement be returned to the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District. The motion failed 2-5-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Full Day Kindergarten

Chair Hayes reported that 82% of the school districts in the Commonwealth have tuition free full day kindergarten. The Whitman-Hanson Regional School District currently does not offer tuition free full day kindergarten. Chair Hayes asked the Committee for a consensus to support funding full day kindergarten. It was the consensus of the School Committee to continue to support funding and provide tuition free full day kindergarten as part of the LEA district budget. There was a brief discussion regarding the start-up costs, roughly around \$500,000. Other factors to consider are a possible reduction in transportation costs, state aid adjustments, and the target share figure impact. It was recommended to inquire with other districts to assist in projecting figures to build the Kindergarten program. It was further recommended to ask State Representatives Geoff Diehl and Josh Cutler to attend an upcoming School Committee meeting to discuss a bill sponsored by state representatives to support mandatory full day kindergarten throughout the state.

Maquan Roof Repair

Chair Hayes reported the Invitation to Bid (IFB) is scheduled for January. It is anticipated the repair work will commence in April.

Capital Projects Update

Director of Facilities, Ernie Sandland, reviewed the capital planning matrices, beginning with the District-wide / Regional High School Matrix. Chair Hayes clarified that the capital costs are shared by both towns for the high school. However, each town is responsible for the buildings in their towns. Dr. Whitner added the line items are prioritized based on need. Mr. Sandland reported the priorities at the high school are the turf field replacement, a traffic study at the high school entrances and exits as well as the installation of a signal or traffic light due to the location of the pedestrian walkway at the entrance of the school on Route 27. In addition, a replacement of hot water heaters in the kitchen and locker room.

In the Town of Whitman, the Duval roof repair is a priority as well as fire alarm panel and detection equipment replacement in all Whitman schools. Mr. Sandland reported that all three schools were evaluated for LED lighting installation through the Green Communities Program. Mr. Sandland is working with the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources and National Grid to implement the retrofits to Duval Elementary, Conley Elementary, and Whitman Middle Schools.

In the Town of Hanson, priorities include roof repairs at the Maquan School and an engineering study at the Hanson Middle School for a recommission and engineering study of the HVAC systems (air quality control).

Mr. O'Brien recommended including a front end loader to the District/High School matrix. Currently the district rents a front end loader for snow removal. Mr. Sandland discussed the benefits of the district owning its own front end loader as well as the cost effectiveness purchase versus leasing.

Records Access Officer

Chair Hayes reported that on January 1, 2017, An Act to Improve Public Records will go into effective. Under the new public records legislation, a records access office must be designated by January 1, 2017. Dr. Dillon discussed the details of the new law. The municipality must designate one or more Records Access Officers (RAO). Contact information for the RAO must be publicly posted with contact information. The requirement time frame for requests and responses has been updated. Associated fees have also been established. The appeals process for the requestor has been amended. It is recommended to respond electronically in most cases. Chair Hayes requested a motion to appoint Dr. Patrick Dillon, Assistant Superintendent as the Records Access Officer (RAO).

VOTE: Mr. O'Brien motioned; Mr. Howard seconded; voted to designate Dr. Patrick Dillon, Assistant Superintendent as the Records Access Officer (RAO) for the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District. The motion passed unanimously.

VOTE: Mr. O'Brien motioned; Mr. Howard seconded; voted to designate Dr. Ruth Gilbert-Whitner, Superintendent of Schools, as the alternate Records Access Officer (RAO) for the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District. The motion passed unanimously.

Town of Hanson – Technology Contract

Chad Peters reported that the Town of Hanson Technology Contract will be discontinued effective March 31, 2017. The Whitman-Hanson Regional School District will no longer support the town of Hanson technology needs due to the growing needs of the town.

Declaration of Surplus

Whitman Middle School recommendation to accept a list of surplus items, which includes furniture, outdated materials, and computer equipment, as surplus.

VOTE: Mr. Cullity motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to approve the request to declare items as surplus at the Whitman Middle School as presented in a memo dated December 9, 2016. The motion passed unanimously.

Field Trip Requests

High School Spanish Club travel to New York City

VOTE: Mr. Cullity motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to waive the nurse requirement and approve the out of state high school field trip request for the Spanish Club to attend the Broadway show “On Your Feet” in New York City on May 10, 2017. The motion passed unanimously.

Donation Acceptance

Indian Head School

VOTE: Mr. Cullity motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to accept the \$400 donation from Shaw’s Supermarkets Charitable Foundation as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Policy Subcommittee

There was nothing new to report.

Facilities Subcommittee

Mr. Sandland reported earlier in the meeting.

Legislative Update

There was nothing new to report.

North River Collaborative Update

Mr. Bois reported the executive director search has been re-posted. Mr. Bois announced he has been appointed to the Sick Bank Approval Committee for North River Collaborative.

Pilgrim Area Collaborative

Mr. Bois reported the budget process for the upcoming year is underway. The Collaborative is also working with Lori Likis for Strategic Planning. The Pilgrim Area Collaborative report will be sent electronically to all School Committee members.

Regional Agreement Update

Dr. Whitner reported she is in contact with Steve Hemman, Assistant Director at MARS, to discuss how they can support regional school districts with regionalization agreements. The cost can range anywhere from \$3,000 to \$10,000 and is based on need. The process may take six to seven months.

The work is accomplished via a subcommittee of the School Committee and involves working with the town administrators. Ultimately, the agreement is approved by the DESE Commissioner Mitchell Chester. Dr. Whitner commented the project may commence once the Committee determines to move forward.

VOTE: Mr. Trotta motioned; Mr. O'Brien seconded; voted to move forward with a program through the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools (MARS) to assist with the WHRSD Regional Agreement update/amendment, as discussed. The motion carried unanimously.

Warrant Subcommittee

Christine Suckow reported that Warrant Subcommittee meetings will be processed on Thursdays, every two weeks, to sign warrants. The warrant will be ready at 9:00 a.m. for signatures. Mrs. Suckow thanks the School Committee members for their time.

Chair Hayes announced the following important dates to remember:

December 23, 2016 - January 2, 2017 – NO SCHOOL – Holiday Recess

December 26, 2016 – Central Offices Closed – Christmas Day Observed

January 2, 2017 – Central Offices Closed – New Year's Day Observed

January 3, 2017 – All students and staff return from holiday recess

January 11, 2017 – Facilities & Capital Projects Subcommittee meeting - 6:00 PM HS Library

January 11, 2017 – School Committee Meeting – 7:00 PM HS Library

January 16, 2017 – NO School – Central Offices Closed – Martin Luther King Day observed

February 1, 2017 – School Committee Budget Public Hearing Meeting – 7:00 PM – HS Library

Chair Hayes announced the School Committee will enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing potential litigation because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the School Committee's litigating position.

VOTE: Mr. Howard motioned; Mr. Trotta seconded; roll call voted to go into Executive Session at 9:05 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE: Mr. Cullity motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; roll call voted to come out of Executive Session at 9:18 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE: Mr. Cullity motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted Michelle Kelley

Handouts:

Budget Reports

December 14, 2016 Meeting Agenda

November 9, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Capital Planning Matrices (Town of Whitman, Town of Hanson, and WHRSD and High School)

Updated Public Records Law Information
Field Trip Request High School Spanish Class to New York City
Whitman Middle School Request to declare items as surplus
Donation acceptance request - Indian Head School from Shaw's Supermarkets
Year to Date budget and revenue reports
MARS legal fund memo
October 1 Enrollment Summary and Statistics Report