

WHITMAN-HANSON REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Minutes of May 10, 2017
Held at the Whitman-Hanson Regional High School

Meeting convened: 7:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned: 8:53 p.m.

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

Members absent: Kevin Lynam

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

Chair Hayes brought the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and announced the meeting was being broadcast live and recorded.

In recognition of National Teacher Appreciation Week, Chair Hayes thanked teachers everywhere for the work they do for student success.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

April 12, 2017 Meeting Minutes

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded; voted to approve the meeting minutes of April 12, 2017 School Committee, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

STUDENT ADVISORY REPORT

Student Council Representative was not present to report.

Chair Hayes announced several important upcoming events and dates.

- May 18, 2017 – Art in Bloom – High School Library at 5:30 PM
- May 20, 2017 – Town Elections
- May 22, 2017 – School Committee Re-organization Meeting at 7:00 PM
- May 26, 2017 – Last Day for High School Seniors
- May 31, 2017 – Senior Awards Night at 6:30 PM
- June 1, 2017 – Community Evening School (CES) Commencement at 6:00 PM
- June 2, 2017 – High School Commencement – HS Gymnasium
- June 6, 2017 – Kiwanis Celebration at 6:30 PM

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Recognition: April vacation student trip to Europe

Dr. Whitner recognized the adults who participated in the high school student trip to Switzerland and Italy during April vacation. The Superintendent expressed heartfelt gratitude to all of the chaperones for the tremendous outpouring of care they provided, not only for the student who had an accident, but for all of the students participating on the trip. The trip ended up being successful and with a happy ending. Dr. Whitner also thanked Bob Davidson for the work he did to organize and maintain positivity throughout the trip.

Chair Hayes took the meeting agenda out of order to accommodate presentations.

High School Graduation 2017

High School Principal Jeff Szymaniak reported that several parents have approached him to reconsider the current graduation admission procedures. Parents have requested rationing admission tickets to graduating seniors for the high school commencement, rather than having a general admission. Mr. Szymaniak reported he met with the assistant principal and high school administrative assistant to research alternative options on admittance for the program. Mr. Szymaniak reported he also discussed options and procedures with other districts. A number of other school districts provide two to four tickets to each graduating senior or make modifications to tickets if inclement weather occurs. Mr. Szymaniak explained that the high school gym can hold 1,700 seats on the floor and another 900 around the track above the gym. There are also two large screens in the gym as well as a live stream to the Dr. John F. McEwan Performing Arts Center. The Performing Arts Center also provides air conditioning should weather conditions prove to be too hot for some attendees and also allows for traffic overflow. Mr. Szymaniak shared a solution that he felt comfortable with and would also accommodate the request to provide tickets at graduation. Four tickets would be assigned to each graduating senior. The ticket holders would be allowed into the gym for seating prior to the general admission start time. Mr. Szymaniak will manage staff who will oversee admission to the gym entrance. Chair Hayes recommended a letter with complete instructions should along with the tickets.

VOTE: Mr. O'Brien motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to approve the new graduation admission procedure to provide four tickets to each graduating senior, as discussed. IN addition, this procedure is to be re-visited annually. The motion passed 8-1-0. Chair Hayes opposed.

Town Meetings – May 1, 2017 Results

The Superintendent reported on the May Town Meeting and warrant article results for each town. The operating budget passed in both towns unanimously. Dr. Whitner discussed what the level services budget means for the District and noted that over the last seven years, the average increase to the operating budget was only around 1%. Dr. Whitner commented on the collaboration of the leadership team, School Committee, and town officials to avoid an override situation and establish a solution to fund the 2017-2018 budget. The Superintendent thanked the communities of Hanson and Whitman for their support of the School District and education. Dr. Whitner reported that a tentative meeting is scheduled on June 12 with town officials and School Committee to commence FY2019 budget discussions.

Christine Suckow reported on capital project warrant articles that passed at the Town Meetings as follows:

For the High School:

Replace the existing turf field, conduct roadway repair work, installation of pedestrian crossing lights, exterior EFIS repairs, hot water heater replacement and hybrid van for school lunch deliveries.

For the Town of Whitman:

Whitman Middle School gym floor repairs, bleachers replacement/curtain, exterior door card access to all schools, playground repairs at Conley and sidewalk repairs at all three Whitman schools.

For the Town of Hanson:

Hanson Middle School recommission HVAC system, exterior door card access at Hanson Middle and Indian Head School, ceiling fans and security cameras at Indian Head as well as the replacement of a kitchen rooftop unit and the original ceiling.

Closing of Maquan School

Dr. Whitner reported the District is beginning to organize the process for the closing of the Maquan Elementary School in the fall of 2018, as voted at the last School Committee meeting on April 12, 2017. Dr. Dillon reported on leadership oversight, transition priorities and other components of the closure groundworks. Moving the preschool program to a new location and moving grade five to Hanson Middle School were also discussed. The new location for the preschool program has not been confirmed to date. There is speculation that it will be moved to either the Regional High School or the Duval Elementary School. Dr. Dillon noted the new Administrator for Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services, Kyle Riley, will begin on July 1 and will be valuable in the transition of the special education programs. Dr. Dillon stressed the importance of effective communication to all stakeholders including staff, students and the community. A structured transition plan is being prepared. The leadership team will organize and build the plan over the summer, then present to the School Committee and, subsequently, hold a set of information sessions in the fall for staff, community members, and other stakeholders. The Committee discussed the facilitation of surplus items once the building is closed.

ELL Program

Dr. Whitner reported on the English Language Learners (ELL) program. Several changes have occurred in past year alone. In just one year, the District has gone from having 10 ELL students to 42 ELL students. The District had only employed one English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher. The District needed additional staffing and hired Michael Capronigro in order to meet the minimum state requirements for the number of ELL students now enrolled. Dr. Whitner explained that many school districts are experiencing similar issues with students enrolling that speak little to no English. Dr. Whitner explained some of the procedures for student tracking and the amount of work that must be accomplished as required by the state. Also, some students are coming into the District undereducated for their age group. Another concern is transiency. In order to qualify for federal funding, a district must have 100 ELL students enrolled. Whitman-Hanson Regional School District is fortunate to be a member district of North River Collaborative, who writes grants for additional funding. Both ESL teachers will be attending professional development next week and will report back to the Superintendent with additional information.

Superintendent's Goals

Chair Hayes discussed the procedure for processing the Superintendent's evaluation. He informed the Committee they are in receipt of folders with the Superintendent's end of year summative evaluation form to be completed and returned no later than the May 20. Chair Hayes added that Dr. Whitner will review her goals and accomplishments for the 2016-17 school year.

Dr. Whitner stated her four 'SMART Goals' are directly linked to the District Strategic Plan and the Action Plan of the three pillars of success established for the District as: Pillar I - Every Child Every Day with Healthy Minds and Healthy Bodies; Pillar II – A Cohesive Prek-12 System of Teaching and Learning; and Pillar III – Safe and Secure Schools. The Superintendent discussed the process of establishing goals, sharing goals with the leadership team and staff, and keeping goals aligned with planning for success. The work done on the Planning for Success model was so successful, the Department of Education requested to publish it on their website. Dr. Whitner stated she believes the reason the outcome was optimistic is because the District has become much better at articulating who we are and where we want to go. Although the 'student success budget' was not successful last year, the District was able to address class size issues and maintain staff libraries in every school. The strategies, resources, and accomplishments are listed in the Superintendent's Goals Template for 2016-17. The Superintendent reviewed each of the four goals.

SMART Goal 1: To monitor and evaluate the Action Plans of the District Plan: Pillar #2: A Cohesive PreK-12 System of Teaching and Learning. Dr. Whitner reported that reviewing action plans, meeting with leadership, and collecting data contribute to the success of a cohesive system of teaching and learning. Early release and late start days at the high school (implemented at the high school) to provide teacher professional development and professional learning time. Using this time is key, in order to review Atlas Rubicon, new curriculum at the middle schools, and writing a grant to align middle school math and science.

SMART Goal 2: The Administrative Team will embed the District Plan, its pillars, and action steps in site-based and district-wide communications. Dr. Whitner stated the leadership team is now more engaged with social media (Twitter) in getting communications to the community. Recent meetings with the cable access channel, WHCA, will provide an additional resource for communications. Dr. Dillon is working closely and developing concrete relationships with first responders. As part of the MA DESE Resource Allocation and District Action Reports (RADAR) Project, Dr. Dillon and Christine Suckow will be presenting at the Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials (MASBO) summit during the week of May 15. The District is also working more closely with the local paper to communicate information to the public. The update of the District website was launched earlier in the year, an employee benefits fair was recently held, and a self-service module is being developed for employees to access payroll and benefits information.

There was a brief discussion on the success of the FY2018 budget. Dr. Whitner indicated that a local assessment increase of over 8% has not occurred in years and was accomplished with the hard work of the School Committee, leadership team and the support of the towns and community members. Currently, concerns continue to exist with unfunded mandates and Chapter 70 funding, which needs to be revamped. Chair Hayes added the meeting scheduled for

June 12 with School Committee and town officials to begin budget discussions for FY2019, is the beginning of creating a smooth budget process for next year.

SMART Goal 3: Throughout the school year, I will monitor and evaluate the accomplishments of the Action Plans of Pillar #1- Every Child, Every Day with healthy minds and healthy bodies. Dr. Whitner stated of utmost importance is that students need to be socially and emotionally ready to learn, and in a safe and secure environment. The Safe and Secure grant is now coming to fruition. Food Services Director, Maureen Mackenzie is handling the area of nutrition. The District will need student support for social workers as the North River Collaborative (NRC) grant is ending. Another area of support is Whitman Will, part of the Brockton Area Opioid Abuse Prevention collaboration. A pilot program at the elementary level titled 'Calm Classroom' is being run to support and teach mindfulness techniques to children.

SMART Goal 4: Throughout the school year, I will monitor and evaluate the accomplishments of the Action Plans of Pillar #3 Safe and Secure Schools. Dr. Whitner commended Dr. Dillon on the work being done for the continuity of operations of the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP). Dr. Dillon reported each member has a copy for final edit on CEMP and he will produce a draft for the Superintendent's review. The plan will be introduced to first responders by June 1. Mr. O'Brien suggested a nurse be part of the CEMP planning.

Dr. Whitner summarized by stating that her goals are product of the leadership team work, successful meetings, and great support personnel. She added that the positive community support at end of this year is significant.

Chair Hayes announced the summative evaluation results will be delivered in open session at the June School Committee meeting.

FY2017 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 added that because the state Chapter 70 funding is now provided on a monthly basis, there is no need to borrow money (RAN) to cover salaries at the end of the school year. In addition, it is anticipated state reimbursement may be moving to monthly payments as well. One area of concern at this time is the substitute line which is overextended due to a number of employee leaves of absence. Homelessness reimbursement under McKinney-Vento is not expected to be received until June. The Districts anticipates receiving \$35,000 in reimbursement.

OLD BUSINESS

School District Budget Report 2017-2018

Dr. Whitner reported the final budget from the state will not be released until June. Until then, the District it is unclear if any additional funding from the state, which differs from the House I Governor's budget proposal, will become available. Potential increases in revenue may be realized in an increase regional transportation reimbursement, an increase in per pupil cost from \$20 per student to up to \$50, and charter school assessment.

NEW BUSINESS

Chair Hayes reported the Committee received information on conducting and participating in the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which is part of the U.S. Department of Education, Middle Grades Longitudinal Survey 2017-2018. The survey would be administered on a voluntary basis to thirty-five grade 6 students at the Hanson Middle School. Dr. Whitner added that Principal Tranter is agreeable to the survey and that the data is for statistical purposes only. The Superintendent has also been in direct contact with the U.S. Department of Education who is interested in having Hanson Middle School students participate. Chair Hayes read the contents of the introductory letter stating “The study will capture changes in young people’s lives and their connections with communities, schools, teacher families, parents, and peers, including academic...transition from elementary school...school engagement...and characteristics of schools serving middle grades and the school’s progress.” In reading through the materials on the survey, it was noted the survey would take about 90 minutes to complete and follow up data collection will occur in the spring of 2019 and 2020 when the students reach grade 7 and 8. The Committee discussed the parental participation portion, how the students would be selected randomly and voluntarily, confidentiality issues, and the benefit of tracking emotion and social data on students in the District. Mr. Trotta expressed support of the data collection and interest in the outcome of the survey. Mr. Small expressed his opposition to student surveys.

VOTE: Mr. Bois motioned; Mr. Small seconded; voted to participate in the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which is part of the U.S. Department of Education, Middle Grades Longitudinal Survey 2017-2018, as presented. The motion carried 8-1-0. Mr. Small opposed.

School Physician

The Superintendent reported that the school physician, Dr. Joseph Asiaf, is no longer interested in the position for the upcoming 2017-18 school year. Dr. Queally reported he is working with the state and local physicians to find a suitable fit for the school physician position for the upcoming school year. Dr. Queally commented briefly on the duties of a school physician which include authorizing standing orders for school nurses, assistance with medical questions, IEP medical needs consulting and other related responsibilities. It was the recommendation of the Committee to send a thank you note to Dr. Joseph Asiaf for his years of service to the students and staff in the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Policy Sub-Committee

There was nothing new to report.

Facilities and Capital Improvements Sub-committee Report

Mr. Small reported the Facilities Subcommittee met earlier in the evening. The capital project items were discussed as Mrs. Suckow reported earlier. Mrs. Suckow reported on the Duval roof project. A meeting with Gale Associates to review the evaluation draft will be held on Monday, May 15. A subsequent meeting will take place in June. Mr. Small reported the Maquan roof repair is nearly complete. A door to the roof is on order and is expected to arrive on May 22 and that will complete the total project on May 30. Christine Suckow reported the invitation to bid is being prepared for the replacement of the turf field at the high school and will be available on the District website on May 15. On Friday, May 19 there will be an on-site walk through of the field at 10:00 a.m. and bids will be due back to the District on May 30 by 1:00 p.m. It is anticipated

the project would begin as soon early as the end of June and completed by the start of the new school year in August.

Mr. Small commented that a recent article in the Boston Globe on a state program to conduct lead and copper level water tests in schools did not include the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District. Mr. Small reported the reason why the District information was omitted from the article was that the District had already conducted water testing in all schools, outside of the state program. The only issue found, which was immediately rectified, was a bubbler and faucet at Indian Head School. Mr. Small commended the District on proactively testing, and, to an even more extensive level than the state program for testing called for. Mr. Sandland reported mosquito spraying will be conducted in the beginning of June through the Plymouth County Mosquito Control project.

Legislative Update

There was nothing new to report.

North River Collaborative

Mr. Bois reported the next meeting will be held on May 15, 2017. Effective July 1, 2017 the Board make-up will change from school committee members to superintendents of the member districts. Mr. Bois offered to remain a representative to report back on occasion.

Pilgrim Area Collaborative

Mr. Bois reported the budget subcommittee met, reviewed the budget and will present to the Board at the end of May. Dr. Whitner added she continues to participate in the Planning for Success model for Pilgrim Area Collaborative for their strategic planning process, which is nearly complete, as a participant and a facilitator in training.

Regional Agreement Committee

Although the District has been working with the consultant from Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools (MARS) on scheduling potential dates for a meeting, Dr. Whitner recommended waiting until after the Town Elections on May 20 to hold the first meeting of the Regional Agreement Committee.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. O'Brien; seconded; voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted Michelle Kelley

Handouts:

- 1) Meeting Agenda for May 3, 2017
- 2) Meeting Minutes of April 12, 2017
- 3) U.S. Department of Education middle grades survey
- 4) Letter of appointment for Kyle Riley
- 5) Letters to Europe field trip chaperones

- 6) YTD Expenditures and Appropriations Budget Reports
- 7) H.S. Graduation permits for parking
- 8) Superintendent's Year End Summative Evaluation Form