

WHITMAN-HANSON REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of October 12, 2016

Held at the Whitman-Hanson Regional High School

Meeting convened: 7:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned: 9:14 p.m.

Members present: Robert Hayes, Frederick Small, Daniel Cullity, Robert Trotta, Christopher Howard, Michael Jones, Steve Bois, Kevin Lynam, Alexandria Taylor, Robert O'Brien, Jr. (left at 8:30 p.m.)

Members absent: None

Administrators present: Dr. Ruth Gilbert-Whitner, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Patrick Dillon, Asst. Superintendent for Human Resources/Support Services
Ellen Stockdale, Asst. Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Staff Dev.
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 7:00 p.m. and announced the meeting was being broadcast live and recorded.

Chair Hayes took the meeting out of order.

Contract Ratification – WHEA Unit D

Chair Hayes announced that School Committee and Whitman Hanson Education Association have established a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in order to ratify the collective bargaining agreement for Unit D, Paraprofessionals. A copy of the MOA was issued to the Committee and municipal representative and Hanson Town Administrator, Michael McCue. Hanson Board of Selectmen Chair, James McGahan, alternate voting designee for Hanson Town Administrator, Michael McCue, voted in Mr. McCue's absence.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to ratify the 2015-2018 Unit D Contract and accept the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Whitman-Hanson Regional School Committee (WHRSC) and the Whitman Hanson Education Association (WHEA) Unit D; Paraprofessionals, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

M.A.S.S. Academic Excellence Awards

The Superintendent and School Committee Chair presented high school seniors, Emily Cook and Olivia Morse, the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendent's M.A.S.S. Academic Excellence Award. The M.A.S.S. recognizes the top two academic seniors annually with this award. Each student discussed her plans to attend a four year college, with interests in biology, chemistry and biochemistry as well as premedical studies in pediatrics and oncology.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

September 14, 2016 School Committee meeting minutes

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded; voted to approve the meeting minutes of September 14, 2016 School Committee meeting minutes, pending a correction to remove “Jr.” as the suffix after Robert Trotta’s name in the School Committee attendance section. The motion passed unanimously.

Student Advisory Report

Student activities from several schools in the District were reported by Thomas Long, the Student Council School Committee Representative. The Duval Elementary School is in the process of implementing before and after school programs that will include activities such as computer lab, sports, reading, and crafts. At the Indian Head Elementary School, the annual fire safety poster contest was held. The winning student will receive a complimentary breakfast and ride in a Hanson Fire Truck to the Fire House. Students at Indian Head School are also reading *The Tree in the Courtyard* with plans in progress to plant a tree in front of the school in memory of Anne Frank. In all elementary schools across the District, Trudy Ludwig, children’s advocate and best-selling author, will be speaking to students at their schools about strategies for addressing social conflicts as well as how children can become better friends. Ms. Ludwig will also be making a presentation to parents on October 19 in the Dr. John F. McEwan Performing Art Center, entitled “Understanding Our Kid’s Social World: Friendships, Cliques and Power Plays” to discuss children’s social development. The Annual Halloween Lantern Walk at the Maquan Elementary School will be held on October 21. At the Regional High School, after school student clubs, both old and new, are flourishing and seeing an increase in membership across the board. The Annual Miles for Meals walk sponsored by National Honor Society and Student Council is scheduled for October 22.

NEW BUSINESS

Whitman-Hanson Regional Public School District Strategic Plan 2016-2019

Dr. Whitner launched the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District Strategic Plan for 2016-2019. Town officials, principals, and other administrators were invited to attend the presentation of the District Strategic Plan 2016-2019. From the Town of Whitman, Town Administrator Frank Lynam, and Finance Committee Chair, Michael Minchello, were present. From the Town of Hanson, Board of Selectmen Chair, Jim McGahan, and Finance Committee Chair, Michael Dugan, attended. Dr. Whitner provided a brief history of the work done over the last eighteen months to present day for the launching of the 2016-2019 Whitman-Hanson Regional School District Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan, a product of 18 months of meetings and planning, is the result of the District’s participation in a MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s (DESE) pilot program, Planning for Success. The leadership team has worked with DESE consultant, Lori Likis, Creative Coaching, to identify the school system’s Mission, Vision, Core Values, Theory of Action, Pillars of Success, Strategic Objectives, Strategic Initiatives, and Outcomes since March 2015. For each year of the plan, Action Plans identify specific benchmarks, impact, and resources.

Whitman-Hanson applied for participation in DESE’s RADAR pilot project and was accepted over the summer. The pilot program will develop Resource Allocation and District Action Reports (RADAR) to support strategic planning and budget decision making and to help develop DESE tools and resources that can be useful to districts statewide. The RADAR pilot began on September 23 at Worcester State University and continues until the fall of 2018. The overriding objective of the

RADAR project is to be able to align the goals of the Strategic Plan and its Action Plans to strategic budget practices.

The three Pillars of Success are the foundation of the plan. Each pillar has identified Strategic Objectives, Initiatives, and Annual Action Plans. Over the next three years, the District will work collaboratively to implement the plan and focus on continuous improvement and student success.

- I. Every Child, Every Day – Healthy Bodies, Healthy Mind
- II. A Cohesive PreK – 12 System of Teaching and Learning
- III. Safe and Secure Schools

Pillar I. Every Child Every Day – Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds

Foster a learning environment that provides social, emotional, and academic growth for all students.

Dr. Queally talked about addressing the social and emotional needs of students as a major initiative in the District. Through the Whitman-Hanson Wellness Committee, a solid direction has been established. The focus on the social emotional aspects of the learning environment for all students includes nutrition, physical activity, and emotional health.

Pillar II. A Cohesive PreK – 12 System of Teaching and Learning

Establish a cohesive PK-12 standards-based curriculum; Enhance instruction to improve student learning.

Ellen Stockdale spoke to the manner in which delivery and alignment in the curriculum both vertically and horizontally will be achieved. Much of the work being done now by the curriculum directors focuses on this goal. Mrs. Stockdale cited pilot programs at the middle schools and Know Atom at the elementary schools. She discussed the importance of sustaining these programs as a key to the success of the goal. Mark Stephansky, Science Curriculum Director; Bob Davidson, History/Social Studies Curriculum Director; Brian Selig, Math Curriculum Director; and Amy Hill, English Language Arts Curriculum Director; discussed this year's Action Plans for curriculum development and alignment. They noted that at the high school level, the implementation of a late start program has provided professional development learning time for staff that has been successful.

Pillar III. Safe and Secure Schools

Establish Safe and Secure Schools

Dr. Patrick Dillon emphasized that safety and security are priorities for students and staff, essential elements of the Strategic Plan and the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP). Dr. Dillon stated that one requirement was to establish and formalize a steering committee. The steering committee will meet monthly to review the subsection operations, communications and training plan, ultimately drilling down to site specific protocols. It is anticipated the CEMP will be presented to the School Committee in the spring of 2017.

Mr. Sandland discussed identifying precautionary safety measures at each building. Current safety measures include the recent installation of bollards at the Regional High School and Whitman Middle School. Mr. Sandland added the Capital Improvement Plan will be aligned with the Strategic Plan. In addition, the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) will be in the District on Tuesday, October 18 to assess all of the school buildings with the exception of the high school in terms of general facility conditions, except for the high school. Preparations are being made for the visit. There was additional discussion on communications to parents and being proactive working with

local first responders and key stakeholders to evaluate incidents to insure best practices in protocol moving forward.

Dr. Whitner discussed communication and utilizing various forms of media to attain the common goals of the plan tied to the Action Plans. Whitman-Hanson will continue to work with the DESE consultant to monitor the outcomes throughout the year.

Dr. Whitner discussed *The Happiness Advantage, The Seven Principals that Fuel Success and Performance at Work*, written by Shawn Achor. In August on opening day for teachers, Dr. Whitner shared the YouTube video about the Happiness Advantage, a way of looking at the world through gratitude and positive behavior. The book suggests ways to live with gratitude and positive thinking. This ideology is now linked to the Strategic Plan to provide each student with a high quality education that promotes student success and responsible citizenship.

- Ongoing and Supportive Partnerships with DESE for Planning for Success and RADAR
- Ongoing and Supportive Partnerships with Safety Officials in Whitman and Hanson
- Ongoing and Supportive Partnerships with the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District and Community Stakeholders

Christine Suckow discussed how budget planning is aligned with plan. Ongoing meetings will be held with principals and the leadership team throughout the year to remain focused on the budget and revenue resources.

Mr. Cullity commented that providing tuition-free full day kindergarten remains a top priority of the Committee. Dr. Whitner added that 82% of the schools in the Commonwealth provide cost free, full day kindergarten. Mr. Bois called on Whitman town officials to continue to work with the school district to establish a strong foundation budget for the success of the citizens, children, and community.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to accept the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District 2016-2019 Strategic Plan, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

MSBA Facilities Assessment

Dr. Whitner reported the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) will be in the District on Tuesday, October 18 to conduct an assessment of six of the seven school buildings, with the exception of the high school. The assessment is part of the 2016 MSBA School Survey Assessment. Engineering professionals will visit each school and evaluate general conditions, building systems, maintenance, and educational environment to understand how the needs of the individual school districts fit within the statewide spectrum of need. A Statement of Interest for the Maquan School was submitted in April.

Food Service Updates

Food Services Director, Maureen MacKenzie, reported that there were no problems with the recent school lunch price increase to \$2.75. The challenge now is to educate students on the nutritional value of food offerings at the schools. New menu items with greater nutritional value have been introduced. For example, cheese pizza is being served with a whole grain crust rather than the

traditional white flour crust. Also as part of the Strategic Plan communications to parents, the Food Services Department has established a Twitter account and bimonthly newsletters.

Grants Updates

Ellen Stockdale discussed the number of salaries funded by grants rather than the operating budget.. Dr. Queally added that special education grants fund essential salaries, specialized programs, and professional development. Because of the District's partnership with North River Collaborative (NRC), enhanced opportunities are available through their successful submission of state and federal grants. One grant in particular, the Elementary and Secondary Counseling Grant, supports member districts with social workers and professional development.

Dr. Whitner called to the Committee's attention the federal funding for mandated special education services. Although the target for federal funding for special education services should be at 40%, it is actually 16% at this time. Christine Suckow confirmed that grant funding has declined annually since 2014.

Budget Report - FY2016-2017

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. The current budget is \$47,079,141. Mrs. Suckow presented line item transfers for the Committee's approval. The requested transfers are a result of personnel movement, special education needs, and contract ratification. There is no effect the bottom line (see Transfer #1 dated October 12, 2016).

VOTE: Mr. Cullity motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to accept FY2017 Line Item Transfers #1, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Christine Suckow reported the District is on track with spending with 25% of the budget expended. Dr. Whitner added that monthly meetings are held with District Treasurer, David Leary, to review and gauge the state of the budget. Mr. Leary will be reporting at an upcoming School Committee meeting.

Chair Hayes referred to a letter from the Superintendent to Whitman Middle School Principal, George Ferro, congratulating him on his induction as president of the Massachusetts Secondary School and Administrators' Association (MSSAA). The School Committee recognized Mr. Ferro and his continued leadership, participation, and focus on student social and emotional well-being.

OLD BUSINESS

Maquan Roof Repair Update

Chair Hayes reported that although the change order was voted approved by the Hanson Board of Selectmen for additional work to other areas of the roof repair, a decision was made to seek Requests For Proposals (RFPs) for the scope of work for the remainder of the roof project. Chair Hayes reported Gale Engineering provided bid specifications for an RFP and recommended the Committee vote to approve the bid specifications.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted to accept the Gale Engineering bid specifications for the remainder of the roof repair project at the Maquan Elementary School, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Capital Projects

Ernie Sandland updated the Committee on current facilities' projects around the District. The replacement of the high school tennis courts is in progress. All warrant articles on the 2016 October Hanson Special Town meeting passed. It is likely a request for proposal will be prepared for the Duval Elementary School roof repair. The Capital Plan Matrices are being updated to real time facility needs. Meetings with the town finance committees and leadership team will be scheduled.

NEW BUSINESS

North River Collaborative Quarterly Report

Mr. Bois presented a copy of the North River Collaborative Executive Director's Quarterly Report, September 2016. Stoughton Public Schools has been officially added as a member district. The quarterly report highlighted educational programs and services, enrollment of students serviced under NRC programs, a fiscal update, and FY17 grant funding update. Mr. Bois reported the 2016-2018 North River Collaborative Strategic Plan is complete. The Pilgrim Area Collaborative is currently working on a strategic plan.

Referendum Question 2 – Charter Schools

Chair Hayes referred to Ballot Question 2 on Charter School expansion and that some confusion exists surrounding how charter schools differ from public schools. The Chair reminded the Committee that they may make personal statements and take action with regard to their decision on the vote. If Question 2 passes, it will allow for the addition of up to twelve new charter schools in Massachusetts each year. In May 2016, the School Committee voted and signed a resolution against lifting the cap on Commonwealth charter schools and not to support Question 2. Christine Suckow reported on financials and enrollment of charter school students residing in Whitman and Hanson since FY14, explaining the state uses per pupil costs to calculate the assessment to districts for students enrolled in charter schools. Currently, Whitman-Hanson is assessed \$320,000 for twenty-seven students enrolled in local charter schools in Massachusetts. Dr. Whitner noted that although the District does receive some reimbursement, there is a net cost to the Whitman-Hanson School District. In this case, over \$240,000 is expected to fund charter schools from potential Chapter 70 for Whitman-Hanson. Mr. Small provided additional information regarding the tiered formula used in the DESE calculation and effect on the school LEA budget. Mr. Trotta commented on the initial function of charter schools as being innovative but now operating in a way much like public schools. In addition, charter schools are not held to the same standards. Mr. Small reported that on October 11, 2016, the Massachusetts Regional Schools Association (MARS) voted not to support Ballot Question 2. Chair Hayes recommended the Committee vote against lifting the cap on Commonwealth charter schools as signed in a resolution on May 23, 2016 to demonstrate their stance for a No vote on the Ballot Question.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Bois seconded; voted against supporting Ballot Question 2 – Charter Schools that would lift the cap on Commonwealth charter schools, as discussed. The motion passed 9-1-0. Mr. Lynam opposed.

Mr. Lynam commented that the state is fighting over resources. However, the funding inevitably follows the student.

Field Trips

Student Council MASC Annual Conference in Hyannis

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded; voted to waive the nurse requirement and approve the overnight Student Council field trip to attend the MASC Annual Conference in Hyannis, March 8-10, 2017. The motion passed unanimously.

High School Global Awareness trip to Europe

A registered nurse will also chaperone the trip.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded; voted to approve the overnight, overseas high school global awareness trip to Switzerland and Italy, April 13-23, 2017. The motion passed unanimously.

W-H Ski and Snowboard Club (2 trips)

Rutland VT

A registered nurse will also chaperone the trip.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded; voted to approve the out-of-state Whitman Hanson Ski and Snowboard Club field trip to Okemo Ski Resort in Rutland, VT on January 7, 2017. The motion passed unanimously.

Killington, VT

A registered nurse will also chaperone the trip.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded; voted to approve the out-of-state Whitman Hanson Ski and Snowboard Club field trip to Killington Ski Resort in Killington, VT on March 4, 2017. The motion passed unanimously.

Girls' Basketball Team

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded; voted to waive the nurse requirement and approve the overnight Whitman-Hanson girls' basketball team trip to Martha's Vineyard High School December 22 and 23, 2016 to participate in a MIAA contest. The motion passed unanimously.

AP Foreign Language

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded; voted to waive the nurse requirement and approve the out-of-state AP language class field trip to the Trinity Repertory Theatre in Providence, RI on December 8, 2016 to attend the play, "A Christmas Carol." The motion passed unanimously.

Hanson Middle School

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded; voted to waive the nurse requirement and approve the out-of-state Hanson Middle School grade 8 class field trip to the Stadium Theater in Woonsocket, RI on December 9, 2016 to attend the play, "A Christmas Carol." The motion passed unanimously.

Acceptance of Gifts

OneZero Financial Donation

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded; voted to accept the donation of \$4,090.95 from OneZero Financial Systems LLC., to be used to purchase fifteen 13.3 inch Toshiba Chromebooks and their management licenses, for the Indian Head School. The motion passed unanimously.

High School 3M Donation

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded; voted to accept the donation from 3M products of various office supplies to the Regional High School as discussed. The motion passed unanimously.

Declaration of Surplus

Grade 6 History Materials

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded; voted to declare outdated grade 6 history materials as surplus, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Biology Materials

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded; voted to declare outdated biology materials as surplus, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

On behalf of the School Committee, the Superintendent sent a thank you to the Whitman DPW for their assistance with the concrete walkway project at the high school and Whitman Middle School this summer. Chair Hayes read the letter aloud. The letter was dated October 4, 2016 and addressed to Bruce Martin, Whitman DPW Superintendent of Highway/Park.

“Dear Mr. Martin: On behalf of the Whitman-Hanson Regional School Committee and the Regional School District, we extend our sincere gratitude to you and the Whitman DPW staff for your efforts and assistance during the construction and renovation to the walkways at the high school and Whitman Middle School over this past summer.

The District truly appreciates the time, labor, and hard-work the DPW crews provided during the busy summer months. Thank you for your support of the school system and for your assistance in ensuring the safety of our sidewalks for students, staff, and visitors.”

Chair Hayes announced upcoming important dates.

October 21 – Early Release PK-12 – Professional Development Day

November 8 – *NO SCHOOL – Election Day – *Central Administration Offices OPEN

November 9 – School Committee meeting – 7PM – High School Library

November 9 – Facilities and Capital Projects Sub- Committee meeting – 6PM – High School Library

November 11 – NO SCHOOL – Veteran’s Day Observed

November 23-25 – NO SCHOOL – Thanksgiving Recess

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Policy Sub-Committee

There was nothing new to report.

Facilities and Capital Improvements Sub-committee Report

Mr. Sandland reported earlier.

Legislative Update

Mike Jones reported Hanson on local elections and that Sunday, October 16, State Representative Josh Cutler, has planned a debate in Hanson.

North River Collaborative Representative Report

Mr. Bois reported earlier in the meeting. The next North River Collaborative meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 17.

Pilgrim Area Collaborative Representative Report

Mr. Bois reported that on the last Pilgrim Area Collaborative meeting. The executive director's goals were approved. Tuition rates and action items were discussed and the strategic plan is in progress. Ethics and open meeting law was also reviewed. There were some staffing and program updates, subcommittees were established and a report from the treasurer.

Negotiations Subcommittee

Chair Hayes thanked all of the people that worked to complete the 2015-2018 ratification of all of the Whitman Hanson Education Association collective bargaining units.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mrs. Taylor seconded; voted to adjourn the meeting at 9:14 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted Michelle Kelley

Enclosed:

- 1) Meeting Agenda October 12, 2016
- 2) Meeting Minutes September 14, 2016
- 3) Invitation letters for MASS Academic Excellence Awards
- 4) Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) 2015-2018 for Unit D
- 5) North River Collaborative Executive Director's Quarterly Report 9/2016
- 6) Field Trip Requests
- 7) Donations
- 8) Surplus request
- 9) Congratulatory letter to George Ferro
- 10) Thank you letter to Whitman DPW
- 11) Invitation letters to town officials for Strategic Plan launching
- 12) Copy of October 2016 Town of Hanson Special Town Meeting Article
- 13) *The Happiness Advantage* by Shawn Achor
- 14) WHRSD Strategic Plan 2016-2019, Rollout and Action Plans
- 15) 2016-2019 Action Plans, and District Rollout and Action Plan