

WHITMAN-HANSON REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of April 11, 2018

Held at the Whitman-Hanson Regional High School
600 Franklin Street, Whitman MA

Meeting convened: 7:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned: 10:00 p.m.

Members present: Robert Hayes, Frederick Small, Michael Jones (left at 9:48 p.m.), Daniel Cullity, Kevin Lynam, Robert Trotta, Christopher Howard, and Robert O'Brien, Jr.

Members absent: Steve Bois and Alexandria Taylor

Administrators present: Dr. Ruth Gilbert-Whitner, Superintendent of Schools
Kyle Riley, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
Christine Suckow, Executive Director of Business Services
Rosamond Dorrance, Interim Central Office Administrator
Chad Peters, Director of Technology Services

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

Dr. Whitner introduced Indian Head School music teacher, Chad Gillander, and the Indian Head Elementary School Student Guitar Ensemble. The Indian Head Guitar Ensemble was selected to perform at the 2018 Massachusetts Music Educators Association (MMEA) Conference in Boston on March 2, 2018. However, due to inclement weather that day, the Ensemble was unable to attend. In place of their performance in Boston, the teacher-led 36 student ensemble performed three selections for the School Committee to enjoy. Mr. Gillander announced the Ensemble will also be performing at the Middle School Spring Concert on May 15, 2018 in the Dr. John F. McEwan Performing Arts Center at the Regional High School.

Student Advisory Report

Student Council Representative, Marah Burt, reported on student activities. High School Junior students will attend the Boston National College Fair on Friday, April 13. Whitman & Hanson Dollars for Scholars 2018 fundraising drive Cut-A-Thon will be held at the John Russell Studio Salon & Day Spa in Whitman on Sunday, April 22. All proceeds to be donated to the DFS Scholarship Fund. In addition, DFS will host a meat raffle in support of the Lori Sawtelle Memorial at Damien's Pub in Hanson on Monday, April 23, at 7:30 PM. On April 3rd, Whitman-Hanson students showcased their dedication to academic pursuits in the annual Spellman Oratorical Competition. The English Department announced: Dorothy DiMascio-Donohue as the first place winner; in second place was Kristina Woodward; and third place was Madison Jolliemore.

Approval of Minutes

Meeting Minutes of March 20, 2018

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded; voted to approve the meeting minutes of March 20, 2018, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Superintendent's Report

Recognition Gelfand Family Foundation

Dr. Whitner introduced Patricia Freysinger for Gelfand Family Foundation to recognize and express gratitude for the donations made by the Trust to elementary schools under the Know Atom science curriculum. Dr. Whitner reported the Foundation has funded nearly \$500,000 in curriculum materials to the

School District. Ms. Freysinger spoke to the Committee on the origins of the initial implementation at the Duval Elementary School to provide enrichment and enhance curriculum in science and technology. The Superintendent thanked the Gelfand Family Foundation for their generous donation.

North River Collaborative Report

Dr. Whitner will report on North River Collaborative at the May School Committee meeting.

Organisation for Economic and Co-operation Development (OECD) Assessment Presentation

Dr. Whitner reported that the District was contacted to participate in an assessment for 15 year old students to gain a more global perspective on how students will achieve in a global prospective. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a triennial international survey which aims to evaluate education systems worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students.

Based on PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), the OECD Test for Schools:

- Addresses Critical thinking and Problem Solving.
- Measures school performance.
- Compares the school performance with national and global benchmarks.

Presenting the assessment results showcasing how students at Whitman-Hanson tested nationally and internationally were Math Curriculum Coordinator, Brian Selig; ELA Curriculum Coordinator, Amy Floeck; and Science Curriculum Coordinator and Assistant Principal at the Maquan Elementary School, Mark Stephansky. Ruth Carrigan, Director of School Counseling, spoke to the preparations made for students in anticipation of the exam. Mrs. Carrigan added that Whitman-Hanson students tested better than students nationally. Mr. Selig talked about the direction and trend in standardized questions which are no longer content with just answering questions. Students need to apply knowledge, demonstrate effectiveness, extend thinking, and their ability to transfer information and communicate clearly. Amy Floeck reviewed the reading results and reader profiles. Mark Stephansky spoke to culture and climate results compared to U.S. students and the confidence and ability the students in the United States to solve problems. Dr. Whitner reported that OECD is an adaptation of PISA for testing students in Shanghai, U.S.A. and Mexico. The full report can be provided to any interested Committee members.

Eagle Scout Project

Mr. Caleb Parkinson presented a proposal for his Eagle Scout Candidate Project for Whitman Troop 22 for the Committee's approval. Mr. Parkinson's plans to improve the cross country course at the high school and the area environment by filling holes, leveling route areas, building a trench and bridge for the cross country course. Mr. Parkinson will also be removing non-native trees and planting native trees in their place. Mr. Parkinson has worked with cross country coach, Steve George, to plan the restoration and improvements to the cross country outdoor track route. Mr. Parkinson reported he has already met with the Hanson Conservation Commission, who provided permission to remove the non-native trees, as well as the Facilities Director and High School Principal to outline and approve the proposal details. Principal Szymaniak offered his full support the proposal.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded; approved the Eagle Scout Candidate Project for Whitman Troop 22 for Caleb Parkinson to improve the high school cross country route as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Hayes moved to the 2018-19 Budget Discussion agenda item.

2018-19 Budget Discussion

Dr. Whitner reported that at the last School Committee meeting held on March 20, the School Committee voted unanimously to approve an 11% local assessment increase after a lengthy discussion. It was noted the cost free full day kindergarten is currently not a sustainable program and is not part of the current budget proposal. In recent discussions with town officials and recognizing revenue difficulties, the District

reviewed additional opportunities to reduce the 2018-19 budget proposal, and offered the following adjustments:

- Conley School Grade Five Elementary Teacher position – do not fill vacancy
- Eliminate the proposed Community Liaison position
- Eliminate the proposed Special Education Inclusion teacher position for the middle schools

As a result of the adjustments, the budget would be reduced by \$300,000 equal to a 9.5% local assessment increase (from 11%). The Superintendent recognized the revenue issues in both towns.

Hanson Town Administrator, Mike McCue, spoke to the Committee and appreciated the conversations regarding budget with district administration over the last few weeks in discussing budget details and struggles to meet the assessment each year, but working cooperatively towards figures to meet the needs to fund education. Mr. McCue talked about early attempts to discuss budget dissolved but is determined to work with the school district to determine a practicable figure.

Whitman Finance Committee Chair, Rick Anderson, spoke of the challenges facing the Town of Whitman and difficulty to support the proposed school district budget. He reported the Town would be able to recommend a local assessment increase of 5%.

Chair Hayes asked if the Town of Hanson was prepared to support a local assessment increase of 9.5%. Mr. McCue responded making a commitment would be inappropriate. A local assessment increase of 11% is not something that can be supported without devastation to the municipal side (meaning police, fire, etc.) and he doesn't want to see the schools hit hard either but is certain a figure will be determined that is reasonable to all. Frank Lynam, Whitman Town Administrator, also discussed financial challenges for the Town of Whitman. He talked about declining growth and no industry in the town. The funding source for growth development comes mainly from property taxes in Whitman. The tax revenue still exists but shifted from commercial to residential property. In recent discussions, it is anticipated that a local assessment increase of 5% or an increase of \$623,402 may be supported by the town or, possibly 7%. Mr. Lynam debated various scenarios to fund the budget gap, including a vote of the citizens in an override, adjusting the tax rate, or removing capital item warrant articles. Mr. Lynam reported he is also developing a committee for long term financial planning and predictability. He spoke of state funding increases being minimal, reaching target share, and the responsibility of the citizens to support education. Furthermore, unless there is a change in the way the state funds education, there will only be a continuance to maintain minimal services. Committee members, Kevin Lynam and Dan Cullity, discussed how this turns to the political piece of funding public education and that the need for a substantial reform, which this Committee has identified for a while. They discussed options at this time are only raising taxes and asking voters at town meeting. The cost of unfunded and underfunded mandates, as well as insufficient reimbursement for special education (Circuit Breaker), Homeless Transportation costs, and Regional Transportation were discussed. The Committee deliberated applying pressure on the state and to work with local communities for adequate funding. Mr. Trotta reported other states are now demanding change and perhaps it is time for Massachusetts to follow suit. Mr. O'Brien added the towns regionalized for efficiency but believes the state is not keeping their part of the agreement. Mr. Howard and Mr. Trotta suggested any legal action may require the inclusion of a greater list of regional districts across the state, to try to build momentum, and involve other organizations for support, namely, the Massachusetts Teacher Association (MTA). Dr. Whitner added that a regional school district may not charge for transportation. She reported there is a possible movement to look for legislation to reverse the requirement for transportation to eliminate constraints.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned: Mr. Cullity seconded; voted to seek to obtain counsel, on contingency or pro bono, to file suit with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with regard to underfunded regional transportation reimbursement, as discussed. The motion passed unanimously.

VOTE: Mr. Trotta motioned: Mr. Cullity seconded; amended the vote to seek to obtain counsel, on contingency or pro bono, to file suit with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts with regard to

underfunded regional transportation reimbursement, to include as many stakeholders, organizations and school districts as possible. The amended vote passed unanimously.

Mr. Small agreed to contact the Massachusetts Association of Regional School and other related regional communities. Chair Hayes recommended if there is an interest a subcommittee could be organized.

The Committee resumed budget discussions and requested a breakdown of potential cuts to the proposed budget. Dr. Whitner reported that 1.5 positions will be lost with each half percent assessment reduction. Mr. Frank Lynam talked about the Committee voting to adjust the local assessment at any time prior to the Annual Town meeting and reported the next Whitman Board of Selectmen's meeting is April 17. Mr. Lynam added that the Whitman Board of Selectmen will also consider setting a fee for non-mandated bussing. Mr. Trotta suggested the School Committee meet at a subsequent meeting to discuss budget only as the agenda for the evening is too full. Mr. McCue reiterated the inability of the Town of Hanson to support an 11% local assessment increase without having a very serious impact. A motion to maintain the local assessment at an 11% increase was made by Mr. Cullity and seconded by Mr. Jones. Mr. Cullity withdrew the motion. It was determined that a follow up School Committee meeting should be held for continued budget discussions only. The Chair set the date for the next School Committee meeting for Monday, April 23, 2018.

Assistant Superintendent Search

Conley School Principal, Karen Downey, reported on the search and Interview Committee results for the Assistant Superintendent vacancy. The Interview Committee was comprised of the following members: Kevin Kavka, WHEA President and high school teacher; Beth Stafford, WHEA representative and middle school teacher; Chad Peters, Director of Technology Services; Lisa Forbes, Central Office Executive Assistant for Special Education; Pamela Tassej, Duval Elementary School teacher, Christine Bartoloni, Conley Elementary School Teacher, Cindy McGann, Indian Head Elementary School Teacher, Brian Selig, Math Curriculum Director, Duval Elementary School Principal, Julie McKillop and Karen Downey, Conley School Principal and made a recommendation to put forth George Ferro as the finalist candidate. Mrs. Downey added that the Interview committee also felt that Mr. Ferro would complement the new superintendent and has the desired qualities of a new assistant superintendent. Mrs. Downey stated she was pleased with Mr. Ferro's interview responses and was by far and unanimously, the candidate that stood out as the number one choice who has the knowledge, commitment, and vision needed for Whitman-Hanson. Dr. Whitner added the Search Committee interviewed a number of good candidates. Dr. Whitner recommended the Committee appoint George Ferro as the new Assistant Superintendent. Mr. Ferro thanked the Interview Committee, the Regional School Committee and the community for the opportunity to be the next Assistant Superintendent. He talked about his reason for moving to Whitman, his experience as a building-based administrator and his beliefs, vision, and dedication to the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District. As another milestone presents itself, Mr. Ferro spoke to bringing honesty and commitment to the District and substantiating a clear, organizational flow chart to bring more consistency to the District.

VOTE: Mr. Trotta motioned; Mr. O'Brien seconded; voted to appoint George M. Ferro to the position of Assistant Superintendent of School effective July 1, 2018. The motion passed unanimously

Special Education - ELL and Coordinated Program Review Reports

Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, Kyle Riley, reported on English Language Learners (ELL) Program at Whitman-Hanson. As outlined in a handout Mr. Riley reported the number of ELL students currently in District has risen to 52. Mr. Riley stated the students represent a variety of languages and backgrounds. He discussed student skill levels, their needs along with the state requirements for ELL students, and how they are tested. Because Whitman-Hanson is a low incident district, meaning there are less than 100 ELL students, the District is not eligible for Title III funding. However, through North River Collaborative, the District was able to hire a part-time tutor to assist with the management of students. Dr. Whitner added that any teacher with an ELL student in their class is required to participate in the Sheltered English Immersion program or SEI course.

Mr. Riley reported a DESE Coordinated Program Review (CPR) will be conducted in the upcoming 2018-19 school year. The CPR process has been streamlined and is now a self-assessment for districts to answer questions in three criteria areas; civil rights, special education and ELL. He will report back to the Committee as he moves forward with the Review.

School Improvement Plans 2018-19

Dr. Whitner reported the School Improvement Plans for the upcoming 2018-19 school year for the elementary level, middle school level and high school have been worked on collaboratively by administrators at each level with more focus as a team and in alignment with the strategic plan. The principals met as a team and developed a set of common goals. At all levels, supporting to strive to implement a tuition-free, full day kindergarten program for all students was included in each Plan. Duval Elementary School Principal, Julie McKillop, presented the Elementary School Improvement Plans. Hanson Middle School Principal, William Tranter, presented the Middle School School Improvement Plans. High School Principal, Jeff Szymaniak, presented the Regional High School School Improvement Plan.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. O'Brien seconded; voted to approve the School Improvement Plans for the Conley, Duval and Indian Head Elementary Schools, the Whitman and Hanson Middle Schools and the Regional High School, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Search Committee Updates

Dr. Whitner reported the high school principal Interview Committee has put forth three finalists for a second interview and site visits. The Interview Committee was made up of teachers, administrators, parents and students. The Superintendent asked the Committee members if they are interested in participating on a site visit to contact her directly. In addition, the District will be searching for a principal for the Whitman Middle School to replace Mr. Ferro because of his appointment to Assistant Superintendent.

FY2018 Budget Update

Christine Suckow reported the current 2017-18 LEA budget remains frozen. Overages in the substitute and special education lines are being monitored closely.

Old Business

Maquan School Closing and Transition

Chair Hayes reported the Facilities Subcommittee met earlier this evening and toured the selected high school classrooms to see the work in progress for the preschool program. Mr. Small reported the Facilities Subcommittee also reviewed proposals for the new Indian Head School playground and voted to recommend to the full Committee the proposal to install a new 5,100 square foot playground in the area of the old playground and basketball courts.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded; voted to approve the proposal recommendation for the Indian Head School to install a new 5,100 square foot playground in the area of the old playground and basketball courts. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

School Calendar Updates

2017-18 SY Academic Calendar update

Dr. Whitner presented updates to the current 2017-18 School Academic Calendar which reflect school cancellation dates and early release changes that have occurred.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. O'Brien seconded; voted to approve the updates to the current 2017-18 Academic School Year Calendar as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

2018-19 SY Academic Calendar Draft

Dr. Whitner presented a draft of the 2018-19 School Year Academic Calendar listing important dates for the opening of school. Dates for parent conferences and other school year events will be added within the next few weeks. Important start dates include the first day for teachers as August 27, 2018, the first day for students to report as August 29, 2018, and an early release day for students on August 31 to allow for staff professional development. The last day of school, with no cancellation dates, will be June 13, 2019. The calendar includes all school vacation weeks and holiday observation dates as well as a no school day on Election Day, November 6, 2018. Dr. Whitner noted that when the additional dates are determined, the calendar will be presented to the Committee for another vote for the updates.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Howard seconded; voted to approve draft of the 2018-19 Academic School Year Calendar, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Amended Regional Agreement

Dr. Whitner reported that as of Monday, April 9, 2018, one minor language addition was added to Section IX and was voted approved by the Regional Agreement Amendment Committee (RAAC). The School Committee will need to vote to approve the Amended Regional Agreement prior to the presentation at the Annual Town Meeting in May. The amended agreement will also need to be approved by DESE and each town. It was the consensus of the School Committee table the vote until the next meeting to allow additional time to review the draft of the Amended Regional Agreement. The Chair will add the Amended Regional Agreement to the meeting agenda for April 23, 2018.

Policy Recommendations and Substitute Guidelines

Dr. Whitner reported the Policy Subcommittee met recently to respond to information from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) regarding policy updates of February 2018 as noted in their newsletter and to update the guidelines for substitute compensation.

The Policy Sub-committee recommended the following policy changes as voted at their meeting on March 26, 2018:

- 1) Massachusetts Pregnant Workers Fairness Act updates to current policies.
 - a. Update current policies: Policy AC Nondiscrimination, Policy GBA Equal Opportunity Employer, Policy GCF Professional Staff Hiring, Policy JB Equal Educational Opportunities, and Policy JFBB School Choice, to include with new law information.
- 2) Based on new recommendations from MASC:
 - a. Adopt Policy EFD Meal Charge Policy
 - b. Update Policy JICH Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug use by Students Prohibited to include new language
 - c. Adopt GBEBD On line Fundraising and Solicitations
 - d. Adopt IL Student Submission to Educational Surveys and Research
 - e. Amend JLCD Administering Medicines to Students
- 3) Eliminate Policy BCB Conflict of Interest – antiquated and outdated. Also covered in the Conflict of Interest statute and Policy GBEA Staff Ethics/Conflict of Interest

VOTE: Mr. Trotta motioned; Mr. Small seconded; voted to approve the recommendations to Policy AC Nondiscrimination, Policy GBA Equal Opportunity Employer, Policy GCF Professional Staff Hiring, Policy JB Equal Educational Opportunities, and Policy JFBB School Choice, to include with new law information; to Adopt Policy EFD Meal Charge Policy, Update Policy JICH Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug use by Students Prohibited to include new language, Adopt GBEBD On line Fundraising and Solicitations, Adopt IL Student Submission to Educational Surveys and Research,,

Amend JLCD Administering Medicines to Students; and to eliminate Policy BCB Conflict of Interest – antiquated and outdated as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

The Superintendent and Subcommittee discussed the proposed scaled salaries for substitute teachers (unlicensed, licensed, retired, etc.) as well as hourly rates for substitute nurses.

Daily Temporary Substitute Teacher:

Does not hold a MA DESE license:	Per Diem Rate	\$75 per day
Licensed by MA DESE:	Per Diem Rate	\$85 per day
WHRSD Retired Teacher: (Retired in good standing)	Per Diem Rate	\$85 per day

Long-Term Temporary Substitute Teacher: (21+ days, same teacher)

Does not hold a MA DESE license:	Per Diem Rate	\$150 per day
Licensed by MA DESE:	Per Diem Rate	\$160 per day
WHRSD Retired Teacher: (Retired in good standing)	Per Diem Rate	\$160 per day

School Year Temporary Substitute Teacher:

Step 1, commensurate with highest degree

Substitute-nurse compensation for a four hour day will be \$95 per day.

Substitute-nurse compensation for a full day will be \$135 per day.

VOTE: Mr. Trotta motioned; Mr. Small seconded; voted to approve the Guidelines for Substitutes effective July 1, 2018, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Acceptance of Gifts

There were no gifts or donations presented for approval.

Field Trips

Whitman Middle School

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded; voted to waive the nurse requirement and approve the Whitman Middle School Annual Eighth Grade Field Trip to Washington D.C. on June 5-8, 2018, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Subcommittee Reports

Warrant Sub-Committee

Warrants presented at School Committee were signed.

Accounts Payable:

041118FS	\$25,382.52
041118AP	\$911,557.20

Payroll:

P41218	\$1,210,821.57
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Subcommittee Warrant meeting minutes

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Howard seconded; voted to approve the Warrant Subcommittee meeting minutes of March 20, 2018 and March 28, 2018, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Negotiations Sub-Committee

The Committee will be going into Executive Session.

Regional Agreement Amendment Committee

Reported on earlier in the meeting.

Policy Sub-Committee

Dr. Whitner presented a number of recommendations earlier in the meeting. She presented the Policy subcommittee minutes from the meeting on March 26, 2018 for approval.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Trotta seconded; voted to approve the meeting minutes of the Policy Subcommittee meeting on March 26, 2018, as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

Facilities and Capital Improvements Sub-committee Report

Mr. Small reported on earlier in the meeting.

Legislative Update

Mr. Small reported the House Ways and Means Committee released their FY2019 budget. He commented that McKinney-Vento Act (Homeless Transportation) numbers did not look good, yet there was additional funding for charter schools under their budget.

Pilgrim Area Collaborative Representative Report

Mr. Bois was not present to report.

Executive Session

Chair Hayes stated the Committee would be going into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares. This session includes a discussion of the tentative Memorandum of Agreement for Unit A and the organization and assignments for Units B, C, and D.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded; roll call voted to go into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares at 9:48 pm. This session includes a discussion of the tentative Memorandum of Agreement for Unit A and the organization and assignments for Units B, C, and D. Robert Hayes - Yes, Frederick Small - Yes, Michael Jones - Yes, Daniel Cullity - Yes, Kevin Lynam - Yes, Robert Trotta - Yes, Christopher Howard - Yes, and Robert O'Brien, Jr. - Yes. The motion passed unanimously.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded; roll call voted to come out of Executive Session at 10:00 p.m. Robert Hayes - Yes, Frederick Small - Yes, Daniel Cullity - Yes, Kevin Lynam - Yes, Robert Trotta - Yes, Christopher Howard - Yes, and Robert O'Brien, Jr. - Yes. The motion passed unanimously.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded; voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Michelle Lindberg

Meeting Materials and Handouts:

April 11, 2018 School Committee Meeting agenda

March 20, 2018 School Committee minutes

Organisation for Economic and Co-operation Development (OECD) testing Presentation

School Improvement Plans (SIPs) (electronically only)

Memo from Principal Szymaniak regarding moving early release date – HS only
Academic Calendars for 2017-18 and 2018-19 calendars will be available at the SC meeting
Draft guidelines for substitute teachers and nurses
Field trip request – Whitman Middle School Annual Eighth Grade Field Trip June 5-8, 2018
Warrant Subcommittee minutes March 20, 2018 and March 28, 2018
Invitation from Drama Club Advisor Colleen McDonough, to *Mary Poppins* from April 27-29, 2018

Additional Handouts

- Application Packet – George Ferro
- 2017-18 Academic Calendar updated
- 2018-19 Academic Calendar DRAFT
- Proposed Amended Regional Agreement as of 04-09-2018
- Policy Subcommittee recommendations and back up