

## **MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE ONLINE MEETING - March 22 2021**

**Full Recording:** [Weston.vod.castus.tv/vod/](https://weston.vod.castus.tv/vod/) (Find timestamps for each section in parentheses)

### Documents Used At Meeting

- [Policy JDB](#): Transgender and Gender-nonconforming Students (For Discussion and Vote)
- [Policy ADA](#): Gender-Neutral District Goals and Objectives (For Discussion and Vote)
- [WEEFC Grants](#) (For Discussion and Vote)
- [2/23 Meeting Minutes](#) (For Discussion and Vote)

### Call to order & Opening Business

A meeting of the Weston School Committee is called to order by Mr. John Henry, Chair. Participating were Ms. Anita Raman, Vice-chair, Mr. Alex Cobb, Ms. Alyson Muzila and Ms. Rachel Stewart of the School Committee; as well as the METCO Representative to Committee Ms. Keitrice Johnson; as well as Dr. Midge Connolly, Superintendent; Dr. J. Kimo Carter, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning; and Ms. Sheri Matthews, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations; and school committee assistant Mr. Jacob Margolin. Additionally, they were joined at the start of the meeting by WMS Nurse Ms. Denise Schwerzler, WMS Principal Mr. John Gibbons and Assistant-Principal Mr. Phil Oates; and WPS Health Services Director Dr. Jamy Gaynor; and Ms. Kathy Hassey and Ms. Doreen Crowe of the MA School Nurses Organization; and Ms. Karen Robitaille of the MA Dept. of Public Health.

Mr. Henry reviews the agenda, explaining elements specific to this meeting, which will include an award ceremony, policy approvals, discussing school reopenings, public comment and more.

### Superintendent's Report (02:30)

Dr. Connolly congratulates students for various achievements, including Jenna, who has been named to the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History's student advisory council.

She also congratulates over a dozen students who participated and placed in the DECA state competition. A dozen Weston students will advance to April's International DECA Competition.

She also congratulates Winter Season student-athletes James, Jacey, Charlotte, Caitlin, Lacey, Theo, Sawyer, and Kate, who each got Boston Globe or Boston Herald All-Scholastics awards.

She also congratulates Sam, who was named the winner of the "Student Of the Year" Campaign in New England, for raising the most money for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.

Mr. Henry highlights the Fractal projects done by WHS Math students, recommending them.

### Subcommittee Reports (09:15)

Ms. Muzila shares that the town has hired its first sustainability coordinator, starting later this month. She adds that Weston will hold its fourth-annual town cleanup, in partnership with groups like the PTO. She also highlights that WPS was accepted to participate in the RIDES program through Harvard, which works on "rethinking" integration in public school systems.

Ms. Stewart discusses [SEPAC](#), including promoting their [facebook page](#) for parents to follow.

Ms. Johnson discusses [BWMPO](#) events and shares key takeaways from their meeting with PTO. She also shares DEI Committee updates, and that BWMPO supports a recycling initiative.

#### Awards Ceremony (7:01)

Dr. Connolly praises Weston Middle School Nurse, Ms. Denise Schwerzler for her outstanding work, which lead her to receive the honor of being awarded as Massachusetts' School Nurse of the Year by the Massachusetts School Nurses Organization (MSNO). Dr. Connolly invites WPS Health Services Director Dr. Jamy Gaynor to say a few words, who also praises Ms. Schwerzler and then introduces Ms. Doreen Crowe and Ms. Kathy Hassey of the MSNO, who speak to Ms. Schwarzer's exceptional work justifying her award. Ms. Schwerzler, honored, expresses her gratitude to the school community, and to her family. She thanks the MSNO for the award and everything she has learned through them. Mr. Gibbons and Mr. Oates also praise her, as does Ms. Robitaille. The committee praises her as well.

#### Policy Approval (20:10)

Mr. Henry introduces both policies to approve, and praises student Laurel Davidoff for initiating on JBD.

MOTION: Mr. Cobb moves to approve Policy JBD and Ms. Raman seconds. They vote unanimously in favor, with Mr. Cobb, Ms. Raman, Ms. Stewart, Ms. Muzila, and Mr. Henry all voting aye to approve policy JBD.

Members thank Laurel for their leadership. Mr. Henry goes on to explain the other policy is a minor update to Policy ADA, which removes/replaces gendered language to be gender-neutral.

MOTION: Ms. Muzila moves to approve revised Policy ADA. Ms. Stewart seconds. They vote unanimously in favor, with Mr. Cobb, Ms. Raman, Ms. Stewart, Ms. Muzila, and Mr. Henry all voting aye to approve updated policy ADA.

#### Discussion of expansion of in-person learning (22:40)

Mr. Henry invites Dr. Connolly to give an update on reopening plans and processes. She shares that all secondary students who had been in the hybrid model are now all-in five days per week, starting today 3/22. She shares anecdotes from students and thanks teachers for their courage. She adds that over 95% of faculty have been or plan to be vaccinated and expresses optimism.

She also discusses a recent increase in COVID-19 cases within the WPS community tied to an indoor gathering in town. She implores community members to refrain from hosting or attending unmasked indoor gatherings with people outside of one's household, to help keep schools safe. Dr. Carter agrees and encourages everyone to be careful, pointing to instances in other districts where out-of-school gatherings led to forced school-closures due to viral spread.

Ms. Raman adds that many students and family have concerns about the reopening, and thanks them for their trust in the district to keep the community safe amid expanded in-person learning.

Ms. Muzila asks about traffic from increased transportation, and advice for students and families. Dr. Connolly recognizes the traffic congestion has increased as we go all-in, and while the situation should improve over time, traffic on Wellesley Street will continue through the year. She thanks community members for their patience with pickups, drop offs, and bus schedules.

Mr. Henry invites public comment from the community.

Community member Dr. Kathleen Mortimer asks about pooled testing participation rates so far. Since the program just started, the district will share more details after more time to collect data. Dr. Connolly offers to prepare and share with her the information that has been collected so far. Committee members emphasize that [families can still register for pooled testing. details here:](#)

Community member Ms. Kristen Lamoreau thanks the committee for getting secondary students all in five days/week, and asks about plans to extend the school day by providing lunches. Dr. Connolly explains that the district is preparing for K-5 students to have lunch and longer school days starting April 5, with hopes to be able to implement lunches for 6-12 graders by April 22.

#### Student Organization Approval

WHS Students and Faculty advisor Rachel Orenstein are launching a chapter of “Pencil Tips Tutoring” in partnership with another school. Now looking for official school committee approval.

MOTION: Ms. Raman moves to approve the organization and Ms. Stewart seconds. The committee votes unanimously in favor, with Mr. Cobb, Ms. Raman, Ms. Stewart, Ms. Muzila, Mr. Henry all voting aye, approving the group.

#### Meeting Minutes Approval (40:40)

The committee considers approval of meeting minutes from 2/23/2021.

MOTION: Mr. Cobb moves to approve the minutes with the caveat of correcting the Title to read “Minutes” as opposed to “summary.” Ms. Stewart seconds. The committee votes unanimously in favor, with Mr. Cobb, Ms. Raman, Ms. Stewart, Ms. Muzila, Mr. Henry all voting aye, approving the minutes.

#### Warrant approval (41:30)

Ms. Matthews presents a regular warrant for \$1,816,821.34

MOTION: Mr. Cobb moves to approve the warrant and Ms. Raman seconds it. The committee votes unanimously in favor, with Mr. Cobb, Ms. Raman, Ms. Stewart, Ms. Muzila, Mr. Henry all voting aye, approving the warrant.

[WEEFC Grant Approval \(42:00\)](#)

Dr. Carter presents five grants for a total of \$30,850.74. This includes two speaker presentations, funding for PCR machines for science classes, and two new school gardens.

MOTION:                    Mr. Cobb moves to approve all five grants and Ms. Muzila seconds.  
                                  The committee votes unanimously in favor, with Mr. Cobb, Ms. Raman,  
                                  Ms. Stewart, Ms. Muzila, Mr. Henry all voting aye, approving the grants.

Executive Session and Adjournment

MOTION:                    Mr. Henry moves to move to executive session without intention to return to open  
                                  Session, for the purpose of discussion of collective bargaining. It is approved with  
                                  Ms. Muzila, Mr. Henry, Mr. Cobb, Ms. Stewart and Ms. Raman all voting aye.