



Weymouth

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Weymouth School Committee

ZOOM Meeting

August 25, 2020

MEETING MINUTES

Members In Attendance: Lisa Belmarsh, Chair; Tracey Nardone, Vice-Chair; John Sullivan; Secretary, Kathy Curran; Rebecca Sherlock-Shangraw; Carrie Palazzo,

Members Absent: Mayor Hedlund

Also Present: Jennifer Curtis-Whipple, Superintendent; Brian Smith, Assistant Superintendent; Robert Wargo, Assistant Superintendent.

The Meeting Came to Order At 6:04pm.

Chair Belmarsh led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Chair requested that public comment be moved to the end of the presentations due to the items under new business and the JECC fees.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to move public comment out of order. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

Report of the Superintendent

The Superintendent reported on the following:

Dr. Curtis-Whipple expressed her thanks to all who helped in preparing the buildings for return to school.

Administrators met August 25 for a back to school meeting and are prepping for teacher and student return.

Principal Strauss shared that Weymouth High School was awarded to be a national banner school for Unified Sports. Weymouth is 1 of 15 schools to receive this recognition. There will be a banner presentation later. This is a community effort also involving Special Olympics and Best Buddies. Principal Strauss stressed what an honor has been bestowed on Weymouth.

New Business

a. SEIU Acknowledgement

Superintendent Curtis-Whipple publicly thanked the 4 units that make up the SEIU (Service Employees International Union), Custodians, Maintenance, Van/Monitors/CDL, and Food Service union. Members have been working hard since March in the buildings including Wharf Street. Packing up Chapman, cleaning, providing meals. She expressed her pride and thanks Joan Caruso and the members for always going above and beyond. In recognition the members will be awarded an additional floating day off.

Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw expressed her thanks and appreciation to Joan Caruso and SEIU members for all of their tremendous work.

Joan Caruso of SEIU commented that the negotiations were the most enjoyable in her 14 years and expressed her thanks for the acknowledgement and the additional day off.

Chair Belmarsh expressed her thanks to the SEIU members for all of their hard work during these unprecedented times.

b. 2020-2021 Athletic Plan & Extracurricular Recommendations (Action Requested)

Athletic Director Rob O'Leary gave an overview of the presentation (attached to these minutes). Topics included: 4 athletic season-Fall (September 18-November 20, 2020), Winter (November 30, 2020-February 21, 2021), Floating (February 22-April 25, 2021), Spring (April 26-July 3, 2021). Middle school sports will compete in outdoor sports intramurally for the moment. COVID19 protocols and guidelines set by the MIAA and the National Federation of High School Sports will be followed. A Fall Season Workout Camp will be held August 31-September 11, 2020.

Associate Principal Monahan gave an overview of clubs and extracurricular activities. There will be a virtual club fair September 14-17, 2020. Extracurricular activities will begin October 1, 2020. Club and activities will be offered for the middle school level as well.

Transportation is still being discussed for the return to school.

Chair Belmarsh advised that the school committee will comment first and then the floor will be open for public comment.

Mrs. Curran inquired about athletic fee reductions and waivers. Principal Strauss advised that there isn't a reduction in fees at this time and the waivers are still in place as well as the 'Dreamcatcher' Scholarship. Students will still need valid physicals to enroll in athletics.

Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw shared that MIAA is the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association and clarified that physicals will be needed for the preseason workout as well and that if Weymouth entered the 'red' designation on Massachusetts' COVID tracking maps, sports would exit competition and would potentially be moved to the floating season.

Dr. Sullivan inquired if fall sports will be modified. Athletic Director O'Leary expects to see modifications with both rules of play as well as practices. Dr. Sullivan expressed concern that the back to athletics plan should be consistent with the back to school plan. He hopes discussion later in the meeting about metrics will make this possible.

Ms. Palazzo thanked families for submitting emails and shared that she is still going through them. She expressed her thanks for including extra curricular activities and confirmed that there would be enrichment activities available in the primary schools.

Mrs. Curran inquired about the preseason camp. Athletic Director O'Leary confirmed that Coach O'Toole and McIntyre would be running the camp focusing on strength and conditioning. Students will need to self screen; daily temperature checks will not be taken. Principal Struass shared that discussions are ongoing with Elaine Lane, Assistant Superintendent Wargo and Athletic Director O'Leary. Mrs. Curran commented on football practicing outside in the midst of winter.

Chair Belmarsh shared her endorsement of the athletic plan and recommended it go forward. She emphasized using metrics to move in/out of phases and confirmed that if a student is attending school remotely that they will still have the opportunity to compete.

c. Professional Development Plan and Staff Preparation for the First 10 days (September 1-5

The Superintendent reiterated that remote learning will be rigorous and very different from the spring.

Assistant Superintendent Wargo gave an overview of the return to school plan for staff emphasizing preparation, competencies and expectations. Building administrators will frame out the daily schedule with job specific responsibilities. Assistant Superintendent Wargo advised that the plan is not one size fits all and that feedback from staff will be imperative. Collaboration and creating conditions to promote success will be of focus.

Dr. Sullivan recognized the challenge of Teachers and ESP's returning to the classroom during these unprecedented times and expressed hopes for the opportunity to make a real difference and do amazing things.

The committee thanked Assistant Superintendent Wargo for the presentation and his enthusiastic mind set. All questions were addressed.

Mrs. Curran commented that September 1, 2020 is primary voting day.

d. Review of Draft Return to School Metrics

Chair Belmarsh thanked Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw for her extraordinary efforts in gathering the information and putting the metric analysis guidelines together. There was a meeting earlier in the day with the Mayor's office and health officials (both town and school) where the information was reviewed.

Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw gave a summary of the analysis (attached to these minutes). She referenced Dr. Sullivan's earlier comments that Covid doesn't look at the calendar and that relying on dates to advance phases is a fruitless effort. Metrics should be used to gauge phase advancement. Community spread, Weymouth Public Schools Infrastructure and Resources, and State and local Public Health Response Capabilities will be considered, tracked and measured over a 4 week period. It was suggested that the 3rd week of every month, data will be reviewed and recommendations will be made. Every week the state releases data which will be used in this analysis. PPE and the burn rate was talked about as well. Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw emphasized health and safety guidelines. These recommendations are consistent with current research. It was suggested that the advisory committee would give recommendations regarding advancement of a return to school phase. Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw shared he hopes that the district would use these or similar metrics when considering phase advancement.

The Superintendent also expressed her thanks to Dr. Sherlock Shangraw for her hard work and efforts and gave an overview of the Return to School Metrics. Dr. Curtis-Whipple emphasized that the return to school plan that was submitted to DESE could be updated and is flexible as information changes daily. The community rating system was used for the metric guidelines. White or Green is good to move in/out of phase, yellow is caution and red could pause advancement explaining that a red designation doesn't necessarily relate to the safety of going to school. For example, a breakout at an elderly housing complex with no students contact could put Weymouth in a red designation, but schools might be able to open nonetheless. DESE recommendations are being considered. PPE usage will be calibrated to determine usage (burn rate). The advisory group consists of Dan McCormack, DPH, Assistant Public Director, Chief of Staff Langil, Chair Belmarsh, Dr. Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent Smith, Elaine Lane, John McLeod, and Councilor Hough and Hackett. The group discussed the data and how to use it when considering phase advancement. The Mayor and Councilor Matthews were unable to make the meeting. The group would share out to the community recommendations.

Mrs. Curran stated she voted in favor of the return to school plan because of the flexibility and believes children should be back in the buildings before January and inquired where to find Weymouth specific numbers. Dr. Sullivan advised that it is on the dashboard and he will forward

it to Mrs. Curran. It was reiterated that if Weymouth was to be in the red that may not correlate to the schools.

Dr. Sullivan said in addition to medical research the metric aligns nicely for the advisory group when considering moving in/out of phases and emphasized that it is a collaborative decision with the department of health. He believes the metrics are reasonably cautious. Dr. Sullivan commented on the fluidity of the situation and the responsiveness of the school committee to public comment and advised that publicizing the metric guideline now and collecting data would be useful in getting students back in the buildings sooner, while giving parents sufficient notice.

Ms. Palazzo thanked Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw for providing a clear 'map' to help with making decisions and emphasized stakeholders being part of the advisory group and looks forward to the guidelines evolving. She inquired about the infrastructure and DESE guidelines. The Superintendent advised that the district is in compliance with guidelines and that staying on top of all changes and emphasized that all swing space is being used. Not all students can be accommodated in the building at the same time at this moment. Sanitization carts will be in every classroom, multiple training videos have been made, air purifiers have been purchased, HVAC systems and air circulation has been surveyed.

Ms. Palazzo also inquired if there is a cost prohibitive piece that would keep from being in the green. The Superintendent informed that there have been meetings with town officials discussing support of funds. Dr. Sullivan mentioned joint maintenance with the town and that the budget is unpredictable however a good amount of aid is coming in.

Assistant Superintendent Smith shared what a tremendous amount of work staff and principals have done to prepare buildings for student return. Dr. Curtis-Whipple additionally thanked Dennis Jones for the classroom checklist and HR Director, Mary Ann Foley and Elaine Lane for all the hard work in staff trainings, and Becky Paulhus for the communication sent out Thursdays and Sundays. The Superintendent expressed her pride in all the team.

Mrs. Nardone thanked Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw and team for the metric guidelines stating it gives a good sense of how to move forward and emphasized her hope to follow metrics and not dates in advancing phases.

Chair Belmarsh advised that as of now the plan doesn't change and that nothing is being voted tonight. The next 3-4 weeks will be used to measure metrics. The Chair stated that the metrics are an excellent step and supports the efforts and thanked Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw

Mrs. Curran suggested a consensus of the committee regarding metrics. The committee is inclined to move forward and as more details are known it would come before the school committee.

Assistant Superintendent Smith advised that a couple of meetings are coming up; one for transportation where Robin Howard will be meeting with First Student in regard to athletics, and 2 a budget meeting with Athletic Director O'Leary and Principal Strauss regarding budget impacts on athletics.

Public Comment

-Jane Hackett, Town Councilor Vice Chair of Education Subcommittee

Recognized all the hard work being done and expressed her thanks for the comprehensive approach and an objective matrix so that staff and students can return to school safely as soon as possible. Councilor Hackett shared her concern for disadvantaged students being home. She also inquired about PPE and air ventilation available to make the buildings safe.

The Superintendent advised that Chief of Staff Langil, John McLeod and the Mayor are working with a third party for analysis so that metrics can be met. She also expressed her thanks for their support and providing funding for ionization equipment.

Assistant Superintendent Smith communicated that the town has purchased 100 individual air purifiers which cleans air through bipolar ionization.

Dr. Curtis-Whipple further stated that John McLeod is overseeing the analysis and could have a document in writing as early as next week.

-Caitlin, McInness

Expressed her appreciation for the hard work behind the scenes especially Dr.

Sherlock-Shangraw for the metrics. Ms. McInness had a few questions:

1. Will all athletic levels (Freshman, JV, Varsity) be playing and will 8th graders be able to try out. Principal Strauss clarified that 8th graders will have the opportunity to tryout for freshman teams if available.
2. Inquired what date the metrics will 'start' to collect data. Chair Belmarsh recommended that will start using over the next couple of weeks and that there is a meeting next week.

-Karen Webster, 9 Knollwood Circle

Expressed her support for a full return to sports and by following protocols it can be safe. She advised that the preseason workout will help prevent injuries for athletes. Ms. Webster shared that she is encouraged by the metrics.

-Scott Wegrzyn

Shared his thoughts on volleyball being a sport in transition and asked that details go to the community for further review when a decision is made. The Chair clarified that the recommendations from the advisory group would go before the School Committee.

-Mary Ellen Devine, 11 Malby

1. Inquired where students will change if locker rooms will not be used. Athletic Director O'Leary advised that at this time students are coming from home and will already be changed for practice.
2. Inquired about the Survey results of complete remote responses

3. Suggested moving the PD on November 10 to Thanksgiving week to allow buildings a deep clean.

-Arthur Burke

Expressed his support for the metrics and suggested tying the athletic plan to the reopening plan.

-Jessica Noone, Harding Ave

Expressed her support for the athletic plan and brought attention to mental health, depression and anxiety and the impacts that athletics has on helping to mitigate them.

-Jess Spenser, 996 Washington Street

-Expressed her thanks to the Superintendent and team and shared her belief that Special Education High need students need to be back in the building as they are the most vulnerable and wants all students to return safely.

-Karen Roy, Latin Teacher at WHS

Expressed her concern for teaching remotely from classroom and demonstrated teaching foreign language while wearing a mask.

-Erin Dodds, 421 Summer Street

Is encouraged by metrics and hopes that they will be used as soon as possible. She also expressed her thanks and appreciation for Superintendent Curtis-Whipple and Assistant Superintendent Smith.

-Julie Doyle, 38 Bantry

Expressed as a parent and teacher her support for returning to sports and the metrics. Ms. Doyle inquired about more details regarding ventilation.

-Annmarie Shaugnessy

Expressed her thanks for the metrics as it gives her hope in getting back to school where children are with teachers to help reduce anxiety.

-Jen Roberts, 154 King Phillip Street

Expressed her worry for the social emotional needs of Kindergarten students who would be learning remotely and shared her hope in the metrics and the dates being flexible for students to return.

-Michelle McCarthy, 23 Regans Way

Expressed her support for the return to school metrics and hopes that they will be used as soon as possible. She also expressed her support of returning to athletics and inquired if teams would be playing out of league not just neighboring towns. Athletic Director O'Leary advised that play will be sought inside the league first but all scheduling will be explored.

-Mike Murphy, 425 Front Street

Expressed his appreciation for the metrics and wants numbers to come down so that kids can return to the buildings and inquired about the positivity rate of people tested, he believes maybe 6%. Covid 19 health reports were used and Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw advised that it is not the 6%.

-Deidre Savage, Grampian Way

Expressed her thanks to the Superintendent and the School Committee and shared her endorsement of the metrics as health and science data is so important to guide by. As a mom of 2 high school boys expressed her support of athletics as they are so important for mental and physical welfare. Ms. Savage also expressed her joy in the Unified Sports program and for the recognition.

Dr. Curtis-Whipple thanked Ms. Savage for speaking up and for the communication and emails.

-Lisa Dembowski, 8 Hather Lane

Shared her support for the return to sports and is encouraged by the metrics and hopes they will be used sooner rather than later.

-Kim Peterson, WHS employee

Expressed her happiness in the 3rd party evaluation of the ventilation and inquired if a copy of the report would be published to staff as she is concerned over air quality. Assistant Superintendent Smith advised that the school department is currently working with town hall over interior spaces, filtering indoor air, modifying cleaning and supplementing filtration, and also bringing fresh air into the building.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to accept the 2020-2021 athletic plan and extra curricular activities recommendation and additional details will come back to the committee . Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

Old Business

a. Tuition & Fees - Johnson Early Childhood Center (Action Requested)

Superintendent Curtis-Whipple shared that the fees/tuitions should be adjusted if students are going to be remote.

Assistant Superintendent Smith gave an overview of the proposed fee changes for the Johnson School while in remote learning. The first proposal was for cutting tuition by half thus leaving the revolving balance at \$488K. The second proposal was for charging ¾ tuition thus leaving the revolving budget at \$563K. The Assistant Superintendent reiterated for families to speak with principals if a further need is required regarding tuitions. Principal helped the Assistant Superintendent with the proposal chart.

The Chair confirmed the recommendation is to support proposition 2.

Dr. Sullivan suggested a prorating system during remote learning to keep teachers employed. Assistant Superintendent Smith advised that it is something that can be looked at further if remote learning will continue on a long term basis and emphasized the impacts on budget and staffing.

Mrs. Curran inquired about families leaving, families opting out for full year remote and expressed her concern advising that families may change their mind after tonight's presentation. She noted the district's commitment for universal free full day kindergarten and supports charging ½ tuition. Dr. Curtis-Whipple advised that 10 families have already unenrolled and that 29 families are on the fence at this time.

The Chair stated that she understands proposal 2 is the better business practice however agrees with Mrs. Curran.

Public Comment

-Donna Beeth, Speech and Language Pathologist

Expressed her supports for the metrics identified earlier and inquired about numbers being specific to Weymouth as some staff do not live in the town and shared the the Covid virus doesn't move but people do.

-Kristen McDonald, 73 Taft Road

Inquired about the payroll and layoffs and Assistant Superintendent Smith advised that currently there haven't been layoffs. Ms. McDonald suggested tuition be adjusted to enrollment days. As a mom of 4 year old twins the annual tuition would be \$16K. Ms. McDonald reiterated that Principal Perez has been fantastic.

The Chair advised that further adjustments can be considered and that families can reach out to principals on an individual basis. The Superintendent reiterated that it is a fluid process and will keep a watch on being fiscally responsible.

-Chantelle Regan, 40 Evans Street

Shared her belief that families are waiting for a decision on fees before making their choice.

Dr. Sullivan values Assistant Superintendent Smith and his advice, however he will support ½ tuition as he believes it's a worthwhile risk on the revolving account, particularly in light of the fact that the committee voted to nearly empty the full day kindergarten revolving account in order to ensure tuition free full day kindergarten.

Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw and Mrs. Curran echoed Dr. Sullivan.

Dr. Curtis-Whipple and Assistant Superintendent Smith agree that to retain enrollment agree with the ½ tuition charge.

After a brief series of substitute motions, motion by Chair Belmarsh to accept the fee for JECC be ½ of the current tuition rate while students are in remote learning, then charging full tuition when students are in person. Seconded by Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw. Roll call vote. Mrs. Nardone abstained. Motion passed unanimously among the remaining members..

b. Policy EBCFA - Face Covering - Second Reading

Mrs. Nardone gave an overview of the policy and suggested adding some language. Copy of changes were sent to committee members (attached here). Assistant Superintendent Wargo also received a copy.

Dr. Sullivan shared his support for the suggested changes however in the interest of time and student returning to the building it may take too much time to review as the additions are longer than the policy.

Mrs. Curran suggested maybe going back to policy to iron out the suggested changes. She also suggested clarifying language 'may be removed from in person learning' if not wearing a mask,

Dr. Sherlock-Shangraw suggested voting tonight as there needs to be a policy on books before the start of back to school. The vote would be the language of the first reading policy and consider additional language as an addendum.

Mrs. Nardone advised that policies can be visited at any time for 'tweaks'. Assistant Superintendent Wargo suggested tabling and having policy reconsider language. Mrs. Nardone emphasized there not being enough time to get another policy meeting on books fast enough and she would be comfortable voting on language of the first reading and revisiting language later.

The Chair advised that this is the second reading and there will be public comment if need be.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to combine second and third reading of face coverings, policy EBCFA. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

The Chair thanked Mrs. Nardone for the thoughtful and specific additions.

Motion by Mrs. Nardone to approve policy EBCFA, face coverings. Seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote. Passed unanimously.

Announcements:

Weymouth Market-September 2, 2020-NEW time-3:30pm-WHS Gold Cafeteria: Market will occur in a drive thru manner

Next School Committee Meeting:

Regular Meeting: Thursday, September 17, 2020 - 7:00pm

Mrs. Curran suggested the next meeting be held at the Humanities Center in person. Chair Belmarsh advised that open meeting law will need to be consulted and suggested Mrs. Curran request that it be put on the agenda for September 17th.

The Meeting adjourned at 9:38pm on the motion of Mrs. Nardone, seconded by Dr. Sullivan. Roll call vote - passed unanimously.

Documents Attached to These Minutes:

- Update

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John P. Sullivan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "S" at the end.

John Sullivan
Secretary