

WEYMOUTH SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Meeting of the Whole
MEETING NOTES

Date: March 22, 2018

Present: Chair Belmarsh, Mrs. Curran, Mrs. Nardone, Ms. Sherlock-Shangraw, and Dr. Sullivan,
Superintendent Curtis Whipple, Assistant Superintendent Mary Ann Bryan, Melanie
Curtin, Sargent Jim St. Croix

Absent: Mayor Hedlund, Mrs. Sheehan

At 6:05 p.m. Chair Belmarsh called the meeting to order.

2018-2019 School Year Calendar

Dr. Curtis-Whipple went through the proposed 2018-2019 School Year calendar that will be on the April 5th School Committee Meeting for a vote.

Dr. Curtis-Whipple expressed that this was a draft, though it had been reviewed by all of the principals. She then went on to review how the 2019 calendar will differ from the current school year. The full day PD that normally happens in September will now be in October. There will be no half day PD in September. Mrs. Nardone asked about the first full day for teachers.

Dr. Curtis-Whipple also shared that due to the past two years having a snow day on the scheduled March PD day's we will be moving to June. Mrs. Nardone questioned the need for adding the 5 additional days for now to the end of the year.

Questions were asked about the September election day (it is on Tuesday, September 4th), conferences will be in November, but not near Thanksgiving week.

Kindergarten registration dates will be moved back to the end of February rather than end of January/February as was done this year.

Dr. Curtis-Whipple asked the Committee to look over and send questions prior to the School Committee meeting on April 5th

SRO Share-out from the MASC meeting on School Resource Officers

Chair Belmarsh shared that she attended the MASC session about SRO's. She handed out a job description that she received at the conference.

The SRO for Norfolk was the speaker. She is a police officer and a certified teacher. She provides health classes on mindfulness and anxiety. Chair Belmarsh asked about bringing her in for PD day.

A discussion was had about the role of SRO's, safety, and citizenship. There is an incredible opportunity to build relationships.

Chair Belmarsh spoke about the LEAPS program. It is similar to the youth coalition and health and safety meetings. It is a chance to find resources in the community that can help start the process of building relationships.

Sargent St. Croix stated that SRO Ryan Hamacher went to LEAPS training. He shared that some communities don't have SRO's. We have a working MOU with the schools. We have accomplished a lot working with the schools.

He shared that Weymouth has 3 SRO's. Joe Favreau for the primary schools, Jim Flanagan for the middle schools and Ryan Hamacher at the high school. Joe does a lot of program work starting at the second grade level with medication safety and good choices in third grade. Jim does DARE with the sixth graders. Ryan works on the immersion program.

Sargent St. Croix talked about the LEAPS program. We already do a lot of integration with the students with education and awareness that is similar to the LEAPS program. Ryan would like to bring LEAPS to the high school.

Chair Belmarsh shared that one of School Committee goals are the SRO's. The Committee wants to support the position the best they can.

Dr. Curtis-Whipple asked if there could be a laundry list of all that is happening and could have place on the website for families to know what we have to offer.

Dr. Curtis-Whipple spoke to the experience of working with the SRO's. They are always available, they have been very responsive and active.

Ryan Hamacher serves all 2000 students at the high school. We would love more SRO's. The chief is only required to provide one for the schools, but gives us 3. Ideally we would like 2 at the high school and one for each middle school. The police department pays for the SROs. We have coordinated with the police, including the SROs regarding a lot of situations. Ryan Hamacher loves his role as SRO and wants to work in some afterschool programs.

Sargent St. Croix handed out job current descriptions. Ryan wants to go to 8th graders who are coming up so that students enter the high school already knowing him in the hope that they would come to him if there were issues.

Sargent St. Croix shared information on events the SRO's are participating in. Ryan Hamacher judged Capstone. Jim Flanagan and Jim St. Croix will be going to Montreal with the 8th graders.

Chair Belmarsh asked about expanding the junior police academy. She was concerned that the lottery might shut out some students who would most benefit from it. Sargent St. Croix discussed how the program has grown. Three years ago there were 95 students. Now there are 120. If they took every student who applied, it would triple the program.

Dr. Curtis-Whipple shared that the principals are always asked if there is a student that should attend the program and said that some spots are reserved for these students, leaving the rest of the spots to be part of a lottery. Sargent St. Croix spoke about the cost and the amount of time for the officers that commit to the program as well as backfilling other aspects of their jobs.

Mrs. Curran asked for clarification of the work hours of the SRO at the high schools. She just wanted to be sure there is a presence on campus at all times. She felt we were in limbo when our last high school SRO was out. Sargent

Chair Belmarsh thanked Sergeant St. Croix for coming.

WPS Suspension data

Melanie Curtin shared out suspension data for Weymouth High School. Some of information that was shared with the press was not accurate. The parent that was interview the student was not even from Weymouth.

Ms. Curtin shared that in 2016-17 of the 288 students the state reported 191 were suspended because of tardiness. this number is a little lower this year, but it is unlikely that we will see a large drop in these numbers. Ms. Curtin then discussed the process the high school goes through to suspend. Ms. Curtin had a discussion with Principal Strauss and Associate Principal Monahan to brainstorm some new ideas. She shared that some schools have Saturday detention but that this is not reported to the state. When Weymouth had Saturday detention, we found that many students/families elected not to serve the Saturday detentions, wo they still ended up being suspended on Monday.

Ms. Curtin also shared that some schools have social probations (a prohibition from participating in clubs/sports). A lot of advisors don't put up with students coming late to class. Mrs. Nardonne mentioned that morning activities like hockey were a particular problem in terms of tardiness. Assistant Superintendent Bryan said she would look into hockey practice times.

Dr. Curtis-Whipple shared if we went towards social probation there would be more of an impact on students who play sports, since they would be benched. We need to work with the students who are not getting to school; some students have issues with getting up in the morning.

Mrs. Nardone spoke about the hockey team as they are constantly late, would you bench the whole team? Mrs. Curran said she thinks many students go home to shower after an early morning practice. What if we improved the locker room to have better facilities for students to shower and get ready for school?

Ms. Sherlock-Shangraw asked if the 288 suspensions are individual students or incidents. The 288 represents the number of students, so the number of incidents would be higher.

Ms. Curtin shared that this includes students with IEP's and 504s.

Alternative Educational Programming for 2018-2019 School Year

Dr. Curtis-Whipple spoke about the Alternative Educational Programs: Foundation, Compass and Decisions. She spoke about the option of sun-setting the programs for one year and have an external review done on the programs. She shared that school behavior expert Jessica Minihan recently came to Weymouth to do a tour and shared many concerns with Administration and suggested doing a more comprehensive analysis with an eye toward long-term changes.

Dr. Curtis-Whipple shared that over the last few years we have been trying to better understand what is happening and the success rate of the programs. We need definitive data on this.

Dr. Curtis-Whipple will come to school committee to ask for sun setting for one year, but she does not want to take funds out of budget, as this will only be a one-year stoppage. Funds will be needed for when the programs are restarted or replaced.

Mrs. Nardone asked for copy of Ms. Minihan's concerns. Mrs. Bryan shared we did not receive a written report.

Dr. Curtis-Whipple shared that the spaces in which some of these programs were housed did not represent a good environment. The space at Chapman was a former vocational area that was not well repurposed, and the sayings on the walls in Decisions did not align with the practices advocated by current research.

Dr. Curtis-Whipple reviewed numbers of students in each program

- Compass – 10 students
- Decisions – 3
- Foundations – 25-30,

The Foundation number not as accurate from a budgeting perspective, since some teachers may teach other classes in the general mainstream as well. We need to have someone come in to make sure these programs are as robust as they should be.

A question was asked how one goes into the program – referral process – teacher thinks it is good for that child.

Dr. Curtis-Whipple has concerns about students being placed in programs with only a subjective referral.

Decisions should be for students with felonies who might also present a risk in the usual educational setting. No students fit that description but there are three students currently enrolled in the program. Mrs. Nardone asked who decided which students are dangerous.

Foundations is supposed to be for students who are overage and under-credited. They are supposed to be referred by the student intervention team. Some of the current practices in this program are not appropriate (ie. requiring students to maintain a certain grade when difficulty getting good grades is what sent them to Foundations in the first place).

Decisions is referral based.

Chair Belmarsh asked for this to be put on the Full Committee Budget Sub-Committee for April 4th. We need to make a decision very soon and need to contract someone to do the audit.

Assistant Superintendent Process

Dr. Curtis-Whipple shared that we are formulating a screening committee and will be starting interviews over the next few weeks.

Process for review of minutes

Chair Belmarsh shared that the process needed to be modified. According to advice from the Attorney General's Office of Open Government, having everyone to add comments to the minutes via the blog and email could be construed as deliberation.

Eileen will send the minutes to School Committee Secretary John Sullivan. He will review them, and they will be posted to the blog. Any changes will need to be made at the table.

With no further business, motion to adjourn by Mrs. Nardonne, seconded by Dr. Sullivan at 6:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

John Sullivan – Secretary

Documents Related to March 22, 2018 Meeting of the Whole:

- Agenda
- 2018-2019 School Year Calendar
- SRO Job description
- WPS Suspension data