

EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Town Hall Council Chambers
November 22, 2004

Present: Michael Molisse - Chairperson, Michael Smart, T.J. Lacey,
Sue Kay

Not Present: Greg Shanahan

Also Present: Colin McPherson, Ken DiFazio
Joseph Rull, Superintendent of Weymouth Public Schools
James Clarke, Director of Planning & Community Development

Recording Secretary: Janet Murray

Chairperson Molisse called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

Superintendent Joseph Rull appeared before the Council to discuss the recent reorganization of the Weymouth Public Schools. Mr. Rull noted that Weymouth now has a 3-tier system; K-4 in eight primary schools, 5-8 in two middle schools, and 9-12 at the new high school.

On September 9, 2004, the school community had an assembly at the new high school.

Regarding enrollment, Mr. Rull stated that the Weymouth Public Schools have 6,895 students. He noted that the 8th and 9th grade classes have a larger than normal enrollment compared to other grades. The 8th grade currently has a total of 574 students.

He was pleased to inform the committee that each school has settled in well and school councils have formed. He noted that Administration created a district calendar that was distributed to all students.

Academy Avenue School has been named a National Blue Ribbon School. This award is based on student achievement. The Johnson Early Childhood Center recently received accreditation approval. Mr. Rull noted that Administration is working on a strategic 5-year plan for Early Childhood Education.

When questioned about an all day kindergarten program, Mr. Rull noted that there is currently no full day program. The hope is to have a full day program in place for the next school year.

Weymouth High School will have its accreditation review next year. The staff has already begun preparing for this. The high school's mission statement has been revised.

Sue Kay congratulated the High School Decathlon Team on its 2nd place showing.

A presentation was made to the School Committee on October 21, 2004, regarding MCAS results. Mr. Rull noted that only 12 seniors have yet to pass. He noted that several of these students were transfers from other school systems. Currently 59 juniors have yet to pass.

Mr. Rull informed the Committee that Weymouth has achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) per Massachusetts' Department of Education standards. However, he did note that 8th

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grade MCAS math scores are a concern. He noted that the current 8th graders have three extra periods of Math. This was instituted when they were in 7th grade. There is a district plan for improvement within the professional learning community.

On the financial side, Mr. Rull noted that Mary Jo Livingstone reports monthly on Munis.

Two grants were received, which will be disbursed over the next three years. One of the grants is for American History and the other is to help the town create small learning communities. Small learning communities promote opportunities for proficiency and a sense of safety for the students.

Mr. Rull stated that the Police and Fire Departments work in cooperation with the Schools in a coordinated effort. Threat management is a priority. The safety and security manual is being revised.

He noted that the fire alarms in the Gold and Maroon Houses are separate. He noted that there is a plan for an enunciator to inform the other office when one of the buildings needs to be evacuated but the other does not. He noted that they have been having evacuation drills, both separately and combined for both buildings.

For security, there are three para-professionals and one security liaison. The liaison position requires security qualifications and is partially funded by a grant. The liaison position is paid \$34,000 per year.

Colin McPherson questioned the reliability of the projected student numbers from the Lennar Corporation for the proposed reuse of the former naval air station. Lennar is projecting 600 students. The School Committee is planning to meet with Lennar in the near future. Mr. Rull stated that the Weymouth Public Schools are not in a position to absorb this number of students.

Jim Clarke discussed the enrollment study for the Lennar project. He noted that overall in a community, 23% of students attend private schools. It was noted that the Union Street Primary School would be the most impacted. Mr. Clarke also noted that an analysis of the number of bedrooms vs. the number of children would be performed. Lennar asserts that the fewer number of bedrooms equates to fewer students.

Although Lennar mentioned plans for the Fulton School, Mr. Rull stated that there is no current plan proposed to re-open this building.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7:30pm a MOTION was made to adjourn, was seconded, and VOTED UNANIMOUSLY.

Approved by: _____
Michael Molisse, Chairperson