

MINUTES OF WESTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE ONLINE MEETING
10/13/2020

Zoom Link: [Westonorg.zoom.us/j/94015330088](https://westonorg.zoom.us/j/94015330088)

Documents Used At Meeting:

- Science Program

Call to order & Opening Business

A meeting of the Weston School Committee was called to order by Mr. John Henry, Chair. Participating were Vice Chair Anita Raman, Mr. Alex Cobb, Ms. Alyson Muzila, and Mrs. Rachel Stewart of the School Committee; Onika Jenkins, METCO Representative; 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 Dr. Lee McCanne, Director of Technology and School Libraries.

Mr. Henry presented a motion for adjournment to executive session for the purpose of discussion of collective bargaining matters with the intent to return to open session.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mr. Cobb, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn to executive session for the purpose of discussion of collective bargaining matters with the intent to return to open session with Mr. Cobb voting aye, Mrs. Stewart voting aye, Ms. Raman voting aye, Ms. Muzila voting aye, and Mr. Henry voting aye.

During the executive session, no action was taken.

MOTION: Upon motion made by Mr. Henry and seconded by Mr. Cobb, the School Committee voted unanimously to adjourn from executive session to return to open session with Mr. Cobb voting aye, Mrs. Stewart voting aye, Ms. Raman voting aye, Ms. Muzila voting aye, and Mr. Henry voting aye.

The meeting was reconvened in open session by Mr. Henry.

The minutes begin after the conclusion of the closed executive session and beginning of the open session.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Connolly announces a tentative agreement with the teachers union to resume in-person learning for Pre K through fifth grade, five days a week, starting on October 20. She applauds teachers for being willing to return to school for more in-person learning, and addresses some safety challenges.

Mr. Henry clarifies for the parent-audience that the present discussion is about Pre K through 5th graders returning to 5 days a week for in-person learning, in school until noon each day.

Assistant Superintendent Kimo Carter presents the new hybrid schedule for the coming week(s) and details some specific improvements, such as more time for the core academic classes to be held in person. He also shares some updates about transportation planning, with more to come.

Superintendent Connolly discusses an upcoming survey which will go out to students and families. She also discusses a pledge that will come out for all members of the community to sign, which encourages taking care of each other.

Director of Technology Lee McCanne discusses plans for a health screening tool, which parents and families, as well as employees, will be expected to complete each morning. This will start in small phases, and roll out to more people over time, until the entire community is participating.

Ms. Raman asks where the data from the health screen will go. Dr. McCanne replied that the personalized medical data goes only to school nurses, while the aggregated and generalized data goes to the main office, which records it with attendance data. The system will be set up to have all the information be received and acted on ideally before school starts, or at the latest 30-60 minutes into schools. Weston Public Schools will continue working closely with partners like the town Board of Health.

Mr. Henry thanks district administrators for their hard work to achieve successful hybrid learning, and continuing to improve the model. He also thanks teachers for their hard work and dedication to the students, and he thanks everybody in the broader school community for all their patience and understanding as the district continues reopening schools and maximizing student learning.

Ms. Stewart asks Superintendent Connolly to explain more about the upcoming parent survey. Superintendent Connolly explains her plan is to share results from this survey at the next school committee meeting, and continue to share the results from future surveys throughout the year.

Ms. Raman requests that a specific question be asked about live streams, and be open ended.

Ms. Muzilla requests that Dr. Carter goes through details of the new schedule one more time.

Memorandum of Agreement (with teachers)

The school district has tentatively come to an agreement with the Weston Educators Association (WEA) for reopening.

MOTION: Mr. Cobb makes a motion to approve the agreement, allowing some room for minor changes. Mr. Henry seconds the motion. Ms. Raman, Mr. Cobb, Ms. Muzilla, Ms Stewart, and Mr. Henry all vote aye, approving the motion. Mr. Henry thanks everybody in the community for all of their hard work towards reopening.

To review the draft agreement, please see [Appendix A](#).

Subcommittee reports

Ms. Stewart reports out from the most recent PTO meeting. She asks parents to get involved with the PTO, noting that their membership has declined, and they need more parents to get involved. She speaks to the important role they play, and gives information for getting involved. Ms. Raman adds that all families are welcome to join PTO, including or especially RLA families.

Ms. Muzilla does not have updates from the Sustainability subcommittee, who meet Thursday and will have updates from that meeting to be presented at the next school committee meeting.

Ms. Jenkin does not have updates regarding METCO, but also has a meeting on Thursday and will have updates from that next meeting to be presented at the next school committee meeting.

Question + Answer

Mr. Henry reads questions from the community. The following summarizes questions/answers.

- Has the school committee considered remote classes on the days around Thanksgiving?
 - This has been discussed, but the district plans to have regular classes on those days, to maximize student learning opportunities and make up for other lost time.
- Will kindergarten have online learning in the afternoon? (Excluding RLA kindergarten)
 - No, pre-k and kindergarten will finish at noon and will not have remote learning. Older students will still have remote classes in the afternoon.
- Share more details about the special schedule?
 - Will do our best to match students' and family needs to specials schedules.
- How will we begin to track flu shots?
 - The district is working with school nurses to do so.
- Health screening app: Does it tell you when you can and can't come to school?
 - Yes, if you give some combinations of answers, kids will be asked to stay home.
- Are RLA families also required to complete the screening survey?
 - No, although they can if they want. The focus for this is on students in school.
 - If RLA or other families come in to school for services they do need to complete it
- IF elementary students stay home for illness, how will they do remote learning?
 - There won't be a hybrid schedule, so much like a regular school year there will be a need to work with the student to check in and make sure they can catch up upon returning to school if they have fallen significantly behind while at home.
- When will rigor ramp up?
 - Bringing kids in 5 days per week will help with. Making progress with secondary.
- Windows being opened on buses? Assigned seating on buses? Bus monitoring?

- We have adults monitoring social distance compliance at all schools during the day.
 - We will be using assigned seating plans for buses, but can be tricky to monitor it.
 - We want windows open in general, but also they can't all be open all of the time.
 - Camera is recording on every bus, and this footage is available if report is made.
 - The district still needs additional bus monitors for Boston bus runs; district working to hire more bus monitors
- Is RLA still available K-5?
 - Yes
- What is being done to expand in person instruction for middle and high school students?
 - School leaders working on this daily, admin team looking at more options.
 - More details will be available in coming weeks
- Legal implications for allowing students to receive Weston education while out of town?
 - Lawyers have been consulted, we are comfortable we are within bounds of law
- How will in person instruction for outdoor classrooms be modified as weather worsens?
 - Plan is still trying to get kids outside as much as possible, weather permitting
 - Encouraging families to send kids to school prepared to go outside (even if cold)
 - Will have other plans for how to instruct students in classrooms at those times
- Bus issues/questions can be directed to Assistant Superintendent Sheri Matthews
 - MatthewsS@weston.org
- If a student has symptoms and is told to stay home due to screening, do their siblings also have to stay home?
 - No, not if it is just the symptom screening. Different if tested positive for COVID.
- Ms. Muzilla asks to hear responses on the question of balancing academic rigor, and if the increased time in school will allow schools to increase academic workload and rigor?
 - Dr. Carter explains that the community has mixed reactions to the hybrid model... some students struggled, some breezed through; must balance to meet all needs
 - Now that we are having more in person teaching, we expect it will become more like a regular school year, in terms of more challenging content and engagement
 - With 5 days/week, can take a look at more homework for fourth and fifth graders
 - Weston's homework policy is based in research, but it is still open for discussion
- Ms. Muzilla raises concerns about not finishing an entire years worth of curriculum work
 - Schools need to make sure we cover all the essential pieces of the frameworks
 - Weston schools currently go above and beyond the requirements of state frameworks, so even with a slight drop, will meet requirements
 - It is not that we are just teaching half the content; more about prioritizing
 - Older students have the skills and independence to take advantage of it
- Mr. Henry encourages parents with curriculum concerns to contact teachers/principals.

Mr. Henry brings the Q+A period to a close, promising that more information is coming out soon.

Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Mr. Cobb makes a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Henry seconds the motion. Ms. Raman, Mr. Cobb, Ms. Muzilla, Ms Stewart, and Mr. Henry all vote aye, approving the minutes.

Approval of Warrant: Adjournment

Assistant Superintendent Matthews introduces a warrant for \$1,854,884.54. These funds are for normal district operating expenses, going to district employee payrolls and to accounts payable.

MOTION: Mr. Cobb moves to approve the warrant, and Ms. Stewart seconds the motion to approve. Ms. Muzilla, Ms. Stewart, Mr. Cobb, Ms. Raman and Mr. Henry all vote aye, approving the warrant.

MOTION: Mr. Cobb makes a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Henry seconds the motion to adjourn. Ms. Muzilla, Ms. Stewart, Ms. Raman, Mr. Cobb, and Mr. Henry all vote aye, approving adjournment.

Appendix A

Memorandum of Agreement

Pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 150E of the General Laws of Massachusetts, this Memorandum of Agreement is made and entered into by the School Committee of the Town of Weston and the Weston Education Association.

The Committee and Association entered into a Memorandum of Agreement dated September 4, 2020 (the "Hybrid MOA") that modified the work expectations and protections for all members in the Weston Educators Association in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. This Memorandum of Agreement sets forth certain additional agreements related to the increase of in-person learning in grades Pre-K through 5. Except as modified by this Memorandum of Agreement, the Hybrid MOA remains in full force and effect.

All Elementary Students Attend Five Days per Week

1. General. Beginning October 20, 2020, all students, Pre-K through 5th grade, will attend in-person schooling five days per week (MTWThF), approximately 8am - 12pm, with some staggering of start and end times.
2. Schedule.
 - a. Elementary teachers' day will begin at 7:45 am and they will provide live in-person instruction until 12:00 pm (dismissal duties ending at 12:30). In addition, they will provide one-hour of daily Independent (async) work to be completed by students. This async work will not require parent support and though it will be monitored by teachers, it will not require written teacher feedback. This work will be used during class or discussions with groups of students.
 - b. Each classroom teacher in grades 1 - 5 will spend 60 minutes per week meeting with students remotely in small groups or one-on-one for academic instruction and/or social support. These times and topics will be determined by the teachers (individually or by team). The 60 minutes per week may be broken down into smaller blocks. It is expected that each student will have the opportunity to interact with their teacher in one of these sessions approximately once every two weeks.
 - c. Students in grades 1 through 5 will have all specials after dismissal from in-person school, delivered remotely as scheduled by the administration. Students in Pre-K and K will have three 30-minute specials classes per week.
3. Remote Assignments. The school committee expects that all faculty members who have been granted remote positions for personal or family health reasons will continue to be accommodated with remote positions; the administration may need to re-assign some K-5 remote positions without personal or family health concerns to in-person positions. If this occurs, the affected faculty member and the WEA will be notified and may discuss the situation with the administration.

4. Distancing, Students and faculty/staff will continue practice 6' distancing In a similar manner as seen In the hybrid model.
5. Deep-Cleaning: Deep-cleaning will take place at least once per week In each building.
6. Meetings. Personal Preparation Time. Duties: Teachers will continue to have Individual preparation time as set forth In Section D(A)(2) of the Hybrid MOA.

Safety of Students and Teachers

1. Elementary teachers will have additional classroom support to deal with safety concerns such as the need to leave students unattended while dealing with medical situations, behavioral issues, hand washing, bathroom, etc. whenever possible. which may include additional adults located In grade hallways to assist and monitor students.
2. Section B(C)(2) of the Hybrid MOA regarding mask and snack breaks shall continue to apply. Masks breaks Wlii need to be scheduled at times when coverage is available.
3. Air Purifiers will be turned on before people are In any space, which may be done by custodial staff. re-assigned food services staff, or faculty who arrive early. There will be a clear, consistent, and transparent process for all staff members to report air purifier concerns. If any party, including the faculty members, believes there is a need, an alternative workspace will be used while the Issues are being resolved.

Other Provisions

1. Remote Model Expectations:
 - A. Teaching Location: Faculty members will use their professional judgment in deciding whether to work in the school building or at home. Faculty members working from home will enter "Working from Home (COVID 19)" Into AESOP and will email their principal and/or direct supervisor. If teaching in a location other than the classroom, faculty members will ensure that their environment Is well-lit. conducive to learning, free of distractions. and otherwise as outlined In DESE guidelines.
 - B. Meetings, Personal Preparation Time, Duties: Except as modified herein, these obligations remain consistent with the Hybrid MOA regardless of learning model.
2. Live-Streaming, Faculty at the High School will work with their Department Head and department team to increase the utilization of live-streaming or virtual engagement Instruction for in-person and home learners simultaneously as appropriate to provide the best learning experience for all students, The parties agree to revisit this provision within 30 days based on collection of survey data and review of Department Head plans for maximizing live Instruction.
3. Testing: The School Committee will continue to make a good faith effort to establish a comprehensive testing program when affordable. rapid testing Is available, and will keep the WEA informed of progress.
4. Sunset Provision, The terms of this Memorandum of Agreement shall expire on the last day of academic classes In June 2021, or earlier if the Governor rescinds the State of Emergency Declaration, Notwithstanding, the parties agree to meet at least quarterly In the Interim to discuss any modifications made necessary by changing circumstances or experience gained.