



**WHITTIER REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL**

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A regular meeting of the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School Committee was held on **Wednesday, April 10, 2024** at 115 Amesbury Line Rd., Haverhill, MA.

Members Present: Ron Fitzgerald Chip O'Connor Mike Rossi Sandi Coppinger  
Brett Murphy Patty Lowell Mary DeLai  
Scott Wood Richard Early Kurt Slevoski  
Lisa O'Connor Carol Sullivan Dave Irving

Members Absent: Johanna True

Others Present: Maureen Lynch, Superintendent  
Chris Laganas, Principal/Asst. Superintendent  
Kara Kosmes, Business Manager  
Katrina Jensen, Associate Principal

Mr. Wood, the Chairperson called the meeting to order at 7:01 P.M. Mr. Wood took attendance. All members listed as present were in attendance at Whittier Tech High School. Mr. Wood began the meeting with the pledge of allegiance.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Wood asked if there was any public comment. Mr. Wood reminded the public they would be allowed up to 3 minutes to present material and begin by stating their name and city/town. Bernie Cullen from Rowley spoke about the Statement of Interest. He was surprised that one was being submitted so soon. He stated Whittier needs to begin communicating with the cities/towns in a formal way. Mayor Kassandra Grove from Amesbury spoke about the budget. She spoke about offsets from fees, enrollment in the communities and curriculum that compliment one another.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Murphy to approve the Minutes of the Budget Workshop for March 13, 2024 as presented. Approved by roll call - 2 Abstained (C. Sullivan, S. Coppinger)

By motion of Ms. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. Slevoski to approve the Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting for March 13, 2024 as presented. Approved by roll call - 2 Abstained (C. Sullivan, M. DeLai)

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve the minutes of the Special School Committee meeting for March 27, 2024 as presented. Approved by roll call - 2 Abstained (C. Sullivan, M. DeLai)

By motion of Ms. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve the Treasurer's Report for March 2024 as presented. Unanimous

## OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Wood reported that 7 school committee members turned in their school committee self-evaluation forms and results were provided in the packet. Mr. Wood asked if there were any questions or comments. Ms. Lowell reported that she reversed the numbers and put 4's and 3's instead of 1's and 2's.

## STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Dawesny Gustave provided an update on sports and the activities of the different clubs. Softball opened its season against Malden Catholic. The team consists of 7 seniors, 4 juniors, 2 sophomores, and 2 freshmen. The first four games of the baseball season were postponed due to weather issues. The varsity team has 6 returning seniors, 7 juniors, and 4 sophomores. The program has a full JV team and a freshman team with strong numbers on both teams. Due to weather issues, the Track and Field season may not open until after April break. There are many returning athletes and great leadership on the team. Boys Volleyball is off to a great start with its 2nd-year program. Playing tough against all the great opponents they have faced in the state. "I know this will be a great season," says Head Coach Kevin Bradley. The attitude and work ethic are unbelievable. The Boys Lacrosse team opened their season on April 9th against Notre Dame. Girls lacrosse has had a slow start due to game cancellations. However, the first game will be played on April 10th. More players registered this season than in any previous season. The team is looking forward to the continued growth of the program. The MultiCultural club hosted their first Culture Night on Friday, March 22nd, which was a great success. Over a dozen cultures were represented. Families and friends came to share their cultures, and many students and staff participated in dances, activities, and food tastings. Many thanks to those who came early and stayed late to decorate, prepare, and clean up. Thanks to the DEI Coordinator Jonathan Warne and the custodial staff. They hope this can be an annual event. Interact students joined the Haverhill Rotary Club meeting on March 21st at the Haverhill Country Club. Students enjoyed the luncheon meeting and spoke to the club about the community events done this year.

The Chess Club continues to meet every Tuesday after school. Membership remains consistent. They will be having two more tournaments before the year's end: a blitz tournament and a classical round-robin tournament. The Student Government is planning a Teacher Appreciation event for May and preparing for elections for the 2024-25 school year, which takes place in June after the seniors graduate. They will elect officers for the Class of 2025, Class of 2026, and Class of 2027. The Ski Club had a wonderful season. They had 3 successful trips with over 40 students per trip. They are looking into club sweatshirt orders. Whittier Tech Drama Club's *"Mean Girls: High School Edition"* was a hit! On opening night, they had a full house and opened the balcony to overflow ticket holders. The senior talent show auditions for the May 24th show will be held after the April break. Students in the Art club are beginning to create Mandala Designs as well as continuing to create pottery. The yearbook layout is complete and on to printing. The books will be shipped in May with an expected delivery date of May 20th. The spring sports photos for 2025 and the layout process for next year's book have begun. In celebration of National Poetry Month, the poetry club gave the main office poets and poems to display on the electronic sign that welcomes people to Whittier. In addition, they celebrated National Poetry Month by writing poems based on creative prompts presented by Poets who have influenced the contemporary poetry scene lately. One prompt even challenged them to include the NYT connections words for the day in our poem.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

### Personnel Action

The Superintendent, Maureen Lynch reported on the hiring of special education IEP trainers, Saturday/school vacation attendance makeup monitors and individuals to work in the CTI summer program for informational purposes.

### Budget Update

Ms. Lynch reported that the Public Hearing on the FY25 budget was held April 10, 2024 and the budget books will be distributed to cities and towns.

### MCAS Update

Ms. Lynch reported that Whittier had 23 students take the Biology MCAS Retest and 10 students passed. The 13 students who were not successful will retake the exam in

June. On March 26th and 27th, 315 grade 10 students took the ELA MCAS exam. These same students will take the math MCAS exam on May 21st and 22nd.

#### Superintendent Update

Ms. Lynch reported that on Thursday, March 14, 2024, she attended the MAVA General Membership meeting in Marlborough. They had the opportunity to honor two Whittier Tech Presidential Scholars Nathaniel Shramko from Groveland and Gabriela Ortiz from Haverhill. This is a huge honor...on a side note both of these students were national gold medal winners for SkillsUSA. On Friday, March 15, 2024, she attended the St. Patrick's Day breakfast with Kara Kosmes for the Exchange Club of Haverhill. On Monday, March 18, 2024, she attended the Merrimac Finance Committee meeting along with Kara Kosmes and school committee member Mike Rossi. On Tuesday, March 19, 2024, she attended the 19th Annual Women's Educational Leadership Network Conference in Framingham. On Wednesday, March 20, 2024, she attended the Merrimack Valley Board of Directors' meeting in Lawrence. She will be a guest speaker along with John Lavoie from Greater Lawrence on April 26th to discuss vocational education in the Merrimack Valley. On Thursday, March 21, 2024, she attended the Multi Chamber Legislative Dinner at Blue Ocean in Salisbury along with Kara Kosmes. On Friday, March 22, 2024, she attended the North Shore Superintendents' Roundtable meeting in Danvers. On April 26th they will be having a legislative luncheon at Whittier Tech. On Tuesday, March 26, 2024, she attended Open Meeting Law Training online with Lisa Rand. On Wednesday, March 27, 2024, she attended the Mayor's Hope Task Force Monthly meeting online. On Friday, March 29, 2024, she hosted an area Superintendent luncheon at Whittier. In attendance was Elizabeth McAndrews from Amesbury, Dr. Brian Blake from Ipswich, Sean Gallagher from Newburyport, Dr. Justin Bartholomew from Pentucket and Brian Forget from Triton. On Monday, April 1, 2024, she held a budget meeting. In attendance was Neil Harrington from Salisbury, Carol McLeod from Merrimac, Cheryl Wright from Amesbury, and Angus Jennings from West Newbury. On Tuesday, April 2, 2024, she had to cancel the budget meeting because the water had to be turned off and school had to close. On Wednesday, April 3, 2024, she attended the Regional Agreement meeting in Amesbury. There is another meeting scheduled for May 1st. On Friday, April 5 - Sunday, April 7th, she attended the MassCTE Conference at Patriot's Place in Foxboro. On Tuesday, April 9, 2024, she met with Lane Glenn to discuss future planning for a future collaboration together. Ms. Lynch provided updates on some building issues. She stated that on Tuesday, April 2nd a vehicle hit the fire hydrant on the access road. The City of Haverhill tried to shut off the water on Amesbury Line Road but they were unable to because of the age of the pipe. To shut off the water they needed to shut the water off to the school. There was a

thought it could be done quickly and then reality set in that it would take a lot longer to repair. They had to dismiss students and staff. They were able to make the decision by 8:15 and clear the building by 9:15. Ms. Lynch thanked Jenny Green in the transportation department and all of the bus drivers who returned and were able to make this happen. She also thanked the students and staff for their cooperation. The dismissal was very orderly. On Thursday, April 4, 2024 she had originally planned for a 2 hour delay. At about 6:00 am Whittier lost electricity. At that point, the weather conditions seemed to be deteriorating and there was no timeline of when the electricity would be restored to the school so they made the decision to cancel school. Electricity was restored to the school at about 2:00 am. Ms. Lynch thanked Bob Hardy and his team for working what seemed like 24 hours to get Whittier back and running on Friday. The Advisory Board meeting that was scheduled for Thursday, April 4th has been rescheduled for May 14th. It will be a light meal along with the meeting. Again, Ms. Lynch thanked everyone for being so accommodating allowing them to be able to reschedule the meeting. Ms. Lynch stated that for new members of the School Committee there is a training Charting the Course that school committee members should take. Lisa will send you information on these training sessions. She also stated that Lisa has posted the link for Open Meeting Law training in Google Classroom. She encouraged all to participate in those trainings as well. Ms. Lynch reported that April 10th, she along with Mayors, Town Managers, and Legislators met with the Lieutenant Governor to discuss how they would collaborate, what kind of process they would be going through and letting everyone know that Whittier would be submitting a Statement of Interest to MSBA. Ms. Lynch stated Whittier would not hear anything from MSBA until some time in December. In the meantime, she stated they will be looking at putting out an RFP. She stated there are many questions and they want to narrow that down before they hopefully get into the pipeline with MSBA.

Ms. Lynch provided an admissions update. She reported that this year 697 applications were processed compared to 694 last year. She reported that 393 applicants have been initially accepted for a possible 330 seats for the Class of 2028. The rank order waitlist will continue to be reviewed as seats are determined to be available between April and August 2024. Ms. Lowell asked when cities/towns will be notified of numbers. Ms. Lynch stated as soon as we get the numbers, they try to make sure to inform the cities/towns.

Ms. Lynch reported that there was a Statement of Interest provided to members in their packets for review and approval. She stated that the Statement of Interest has to be filed by Friday. She knows this is a quick turnaround from the January vote but they

didn't want to lose any time. Ms. Lynch thanked the Town Managers, Mayors, the Lieutenant Governor and Lane Glenn for rallying around how to make this happen for the region and the workforce. Ms. Lynch stated some key takeaways from the meeting she had earlier in the day about this was there are still concerns about the regional agreement, providing training for the workforce, questions about the admissions policy and making it fair and equitable and sensitivity to local districts in enrollment and curriculum. Ms. Lowell echoed Mayor Gove's sentiments about enrollment. Ms. Lowell does not question any student that wants a vocational education. She stated they should have that opportunity. However, in reading the new Statement of Interest the language about increasing enrollment jumped out at her. She knows that there was a lot of discussion about not increasing enrollment in the prior Statement of Interest. She was asking if the increase in enrollment is around increasing access to the program to align with the NECC campus. She asked if students that remain in their sending schools would have increased access like they do with the CTE program or Early College program. Ms. Lynch stated she does not think there are any ideas off the table at this time. They are just in the very early stages of having discussions.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Ms. O'Connor to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest dated April 5, 2024 for the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School located at 115 Amesbury Line Road, Haverhill, Massachusetts which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future as noted in priorities 5 and 7 of this application regarding total renovation of the existing building and system updates project; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority. Unanimous by roll call vote - 13 - 0

#### PRINCIPAL/ASST. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Chris Laganas, the Principal/Asst. Superintendent, provided a copy of the proposed 2024-2025 school calendar for approval.

By motion of Mr. Murphy, seconded by Ms. Lowell to accept the proposed 2024-2025 school calendar as presented. Unanimous

## BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Kara Kosmes, the Business Manager, provided the Variance Analysis for July 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024 according to the Annual Agenda. She reported that at the three-quarter mark in the year, the District remains on track financially. Transfer requests will be done at the end of the year to balance accounts as needed. Ms. Kosmes reported that the Whittier Tech Educational Foundation will be hosting a trivia night on Friday May 10th at 6 pm at the Haverhill Elks. Tickets are \$35 or \$300 for a table of ten.

## COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

Mr. Wood reported on the annual agenda items for May. Mr. Wood asked members to review the subcommittees and email him if they would like to be added to a subcommittee that has availability or removed from a subcommittee.

## SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Executive Subcommittee has not met.

The Instructional Subcommittee met April 10, 2024 to review new electives and proposed changes to existing electives.

The Plant Operations Subcommittee met on March 13, 2024 and April 10, 2024. They will meet again May 8, 2024 at 6:00 pm.

By motion of Mr. Murphy, seconded by Ms. Lowell to approve the minutes of March 13, 2024 as presented. Approved by roll call - 2 Abstained (C. Sullivan, M. DeLai)

The Salary & Negotiations Subcommittee has not met.

The Policy Subcommittee met on March 13, 2024.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Ms. Lowell to approve the minutes of March 13, 2024 as presented. Approved unanimously by roll call vote 13-0

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve the following policies for a second and final reading: AB- The People and their School District ; AC-Non-Discrimination Policy Including Harassment and Retaliation; AC-R-Non-Discrimination Policy Including Harassment and Retaliation; ACA-Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Sex; ACAB- Sexual Harassment; AD - Mission Statement; ADC-Tobacco Products on School Premises Prohibited; BA-

School Committee Operational Goals; BBAA - School Committee Member Authority; BBBC- School Committee Member Resignation; BDFA- School Councils; BHE- Use of Electronic Messaging by School Committee Members; BIBA - School Committee Conferences, Conventions, and Workshops; BJ-School Committee Legislative Program; CA-Administration Goals; CB-Regional School Superintendent; CBD- Superintendent's Contract; CBI-Evaluation of the Superintendent; CCB-Staff Relations; CE-Administrative Councils, Cabinets and Committees; CH-Policy Implementation; CHCA-Approval of Handbooks and Directives; CM-Regional School District Annual Report; EB-Safety Program; EBB-First Aid; EBC-Emergency Plans; EBCD-Emergency Closings; EBCFA-Face Coverings; EC-1 Regional School District Buildings and Grounds Management; ECA-Buildings and Grounds Security; ECAF-Security Cameras in Schools; EEAE-School Bus Safety Program; EEAEB- Drug and Alcohol Testing for School Bus and Commercial Vehicle Drivers; EEAEK- Student Conduct on School Buses; EEAJ- Motor Vehicle Idling on School Grounds; EFC-Free and Reduced Price Food Services. Approved unanimously by roll call vote 13-0

By motion of Ms. Lowell, seconded by Ms. Coppinger to approve the following policies for a first reading:DJ-1 - Regional School District Purchasing; DJA-1 –Regional School District Purchasing Authority; DJE-1 – Regional School District Procurement Requirements; EFE – Civil Rights Complaint Policy for Child Nutrition Programs; IGA/IGD Curriculum Development and Adoption; IMGA – Service Animals in Schools; IE - Organization of Instruction; IL - Evaluation of Instructional Programs; IMA - Teaching Methodologies; BEDH - Public Comment at School Committee Meetings; CHA/CHC Development and Dissemination of Procedures; IGB - Support Services Programs; IHAMA - Parental Notification Relative to Sex Education; IHBA - Student Services Program; IHBD - Compensatory Education; IHBF - Homebound Instruction; IHBH - Alternative School Programs; IHBHE - Remote Learning; IJ - Instructional Materials; IJ-R - Reconsideration of Instructional Resources; IJL - Library Materials Selection and Adoption; IJOA - Field Trips; IKAB - Student Progress Reports to Parents/Guardians; ILD - Student Submission to Educational Surveys and Research; IMB - Teaching About Controversial Issues/Controversial Speakers; IMG - Animals in School; JIC - Student Discipline. Unanimous 13-0

#### MEETING DATES

The Regular School Committee meeting is Wednesday, May 8, 2024 at 6:30 pm.

#### NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business posted.



**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

There was no executive session posted.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to adjourn at 7:51 P.M.  
Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,  
*Lisa Rand*  
Recording Secretary

*The following list of documents and/or exhibits were used:*

Budget Workshop minutes 3-13-24  
School Committee minutes 3-13-24  
Special School Committee minutes 3-27-24  
Treasurer's Report March 2024  
School Committee Self-Evaluation Results  
Statement of Interest  
Proposed School Calendar 2024-2025  
Variance Analysis  
Plant Operations Subcommittee meeting minutes 3-13-24  
Policy Subcommittee meeting minutes 3-13-24  
Policies for second & final reading AB, AC; AC-R; ACA; ACAB; AD; ADC; BA; BBAA; BBBC; BDFA; BHE; BIBA;  
BJ; CA; CB; CBD; CBI; CCB; CE; CH; CHCA; CM; EB; EBB; EBC; EBCD; EBCFA; EC-1; ECA;  
ECAf; EEAE; EEAEB; EEAEC; EEAJ; EFC  
Policies for first reading DJ-1, DJA-1; DJE-1; EFE; IGA/IGD; IMGA; IE; IL; IMA; BEDH; CHA/CHC; IGB; IHAMA;  
IHBA; IHBD; IHBF; IHBH; IHBHE; IJ; IJ-R; IJL; IJOA; IKAB; ILD; IMB; IMG; JIC