



## WHITTIER REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

---

A regular meeting of the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School Committee was held on **Wednesday, October 11, 2023** at 115 Amesbury Line Rd., Haverhill, MA.

Members Present:    Johanna True    Lisa O'Connor    Donna Holaday  
                             Brett Murphy    Sandi Coppinger    Garry James  
                             Dave Irving    Richard Early (6:38 pm)    Kurt Slevoski  
                             Mike Rossi    Chip O'Connor    Scott Wood  
                             Patty Lowell

Members Remote:    None

Members Absent:    Ron Fitzgerald

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

Mr. James called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. Mr. James took attendance. All members listed as present were in attendance at Whittier Tech High School. Mr. James began the meeting with the pledge of allegiance.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. James asked if there was any public comment. There was no public comment. Mr. James reported that Patrica Lowell is the new representative for Amesbury and Donna Holaday is the new representative for Newburyport. The Committee welcomed both to the Whittier School Committee.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Wood to approve the Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting for September 13, 2023 as presented. Approved - 2 Abstained (P. Lowell, D. Holaday)

By motion of Ms. True, seconded by Mr. Irving to approve the Treasurer's Report for September 2023 as presented. Unanimous

Ms. Lynch reported that Jane Moskevitz, SkillsUSA advisor was present with some of the students that won gold medals at the National Conference in June. Ms. Moskevitz stated that they attended the SkillsUSA National Conference in Atlanta, Georgia on

June 17th. She reported that the gold medal winners that did not graduate last year were in attendance. The students introduced themselves, stated which town/city they were from and what they did to receive the gold medal at the National Conference. The students were congratulated for their success at the conference.

## OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business posted.

## STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Dawensky Gustave provided an update on sports and activities of the different clubs. The Student Government is working on the Pep Rally plans. They have some fun events for students to participate in on October 19th at 1 pm. They are holding Spirit Week from October 16-20. Students will be encouraged to dress up according to the theme of the day. On October 20th, the student government will hold their second annual homecoming dance in the gym. Drama Club is auditioning students for the Fall Coffee House talent show on November 7th. All are welcome to attend and the event is free. Drama Club has chosen the spring musical, *Mean Girls*, and the students are extremely excited about it. The Chess Club is meeting every week. They lost several seniors last year, but this year they have many new players from all grades. They will have their first tournament in a few weeks. Poetry Club has not had any attendees as of yet, but we're going to drum up some interest and kick it off with a fall/spooky theme. The Multicultural Club enjoyed meeting new members and welcoming past members in September. They have two presentations planned for the month of October where students will share about their personal cultural journeys. In addition, they are kicking off a new activity, sponsored by their club: "First Chapter Thursdays" where students will read the first chapter of a book in another language or from a different culture other than their own. They are also sponsoring a book chat where interested members can share about their choice of reading books. Last week's first "Book Chat" had 15 students in attendance. Interact Club helped to set up the Team Haverhill at the Haverhill River Ruckus. They have a fundraiser for a Patriots fan basket now through the end of October. On Thursday November 9th, a couple of club members will be volunteering at the Annual Rotary Veterans breakfast. The Ski Club is in the process of planning their trips as well as a raffle. The yearbook committee will be sending the cover design to press within the next week. The students are all capturing images from the previous 49 yearbooks for use as background imagery in this year's yearbook. Fall sports photography is under way and being covered by several senior yearbook photographers. The boys and girls cross country teams continue to put in

the miles each week. One of the girls cross country runners remains undefeated in the league, with the girls team coming off a win at Shawsheen. One of the boys' cross country runners came in one of the top 10 finishers in the Frank Kelly Invitational in Wrentham. Football is having a great year with a current record of 4-1. The team had a great game last week knocking off top ranked Nashoba Tech in a thrilling game. This week Manchester Essex is coming to Whittier Tech on Thursday, October 12th.

The Chair stated that they were going to take the agenda out of order and have the Architects for the school building project present at this time. David Saindon, the OPM from Leftfield and others from Leftfield and JCJ presented a school building project update through a PowerPoint presentation. They began with a video about the school and why the building project is urgently needed. The presentation included the MSBA process/timeline; the options studied; how the decision was made to build a new school; why Whittier needs a new building; the design; the project schedule summary; a sustainability update; value management options; recent construction escalation; producer price index data; the evolution of MSBA reimbursement; the evolution of effective reimbursement; updated reimbursement rate; the project budget, anticipated tax impact; the District vote; what happens if the vote fails and the next steps.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

### Personnel Action

The Superintendent, Maureen Lynch reported on the hiring of a desktop & network support manager, a cafeteria worker, a director of technology & information systems, an evening school secretary, Spanish and Portuguese translators, club advisors, medical tutors, event ticket collectors and game clock officials. She also reported on the resignation of the Director of Technology and Information Systems.

### Budget Update

Ms. Lynch reported that the Business Manager was providing a variance update later in the evening as well as the 5 year Capital Plan.

### MCAS Update

Ms. Lynch reported that Katrina Jensen, Associate Principal was providing an MCAS presentation to the Committee this evening.

### School Building Update

Ms. Lynch reported that the school building committee has been very busy. They had a District Wide forum on October 5th. They have set up meetings and open forums with most of the cities and towns in the District. They will have a very busy October, November and December. She reported that the building cannot fail and something has to be done. There are two options to choose from, either a new building or a renovation of the existing school. There is not an option to do nothing. The new building will be less disruptive to student learning, include some reimbursement from the state and be completed in a timely manner. A renovation will be very disruptive to student learning, there will be no reimbursement from the state, will cost more money and require a lot more time to complete.

### Superintendent's Update

Ms. Lynch provided an update. On Thursday, September 14, 2023, Kara Kosmes and Ms. Lynch met with Mayor Gove from Amesbury. They discussed the building project and preliminary tax impact numbers. On Friday, September 15, 2023 - Sunday, September 17, 2023, Ms. Lynch attended the MASS Executive Committee Retreat in Williamstown. She is on the Executive Board of MASS representing the superintendents from the Merrimack Valley and North Shore roundtables. On Monday, September 18, 2023 and Thursday, September 28, 2023, she attended the JCJ design follow up remote meetings looking at vocational equipment placement. On Wednesday, September 20th, September 27th, October 4th and today, she attended Whittier's weekly executive project meetings. On Friday, September 22, 2023, she met with Hilltop Security to go over tax impact to communities. On Tuesday, September 26, 2023, she attended a remote school building committee meeting. On Tuesday, September 26, 2023, she attended a meeting in Ipswich along with Garry James, Kara Kosmes, Tia Gerber, Bob Hardy and representatives from JCJ, and Leftfield. On Monday, October 2, 2023, she met with Mayor Fiorentini from Haverhill to discuss the status of the upcoming building project. On Wednesday, October 4, 2023, she attended the Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce annual meeting along with Kara Kosmes and Chris Laganas. On Thursday, October 5, 2023, she attended Whittier's third building project community forum along with JCJ and Leftfield. On Friday, October 6, 2023, she hosted an area Superintendent luncheon at Whittier. Superintendent's from Amesbury, Ipswich, Triton, Pentucket, and Haverhill were in attendance. On Tuesday, October 10, 2023, she attended a remote school building committee meeting.

Ms. Lynch reported that Jim Burke, Jr. from Burke & Sons Plumbing & Heating would like to establish a \$500.00 scholarship for an HVAC student. Ms. Lynch thanked Mr. Burke and Burke & Sons Plumbing & Heating for this generous scholarship. She requested acceptance from the School Committee.

By motion of Ms. Holaday, seconded by Mr. Wood to accept the \$500.00 scholarship from Jim Burke, Jr. & Burke & Sons Plumbing & Heating for an HVAC student as presented by the Superintendent. Unanimous

Ms. Lynch reported that the wrestling team has submitted a field trip request for approval to attend a wrestling tournament in Salem, NH at Salem High School on December 9, 2023.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Wood to approve the field trip request from the wrestling team to attend a wrestling tournament in Salem, NH at Salem High School on December 9, 2023 as presented. Unanimous

Ms. Katrina Jensen, Associate Principal provided an MCAS update through a PowerPoint presentation. She reported that all students took the MCAS 2.0 on iPads. The performance levels are exceeds requirement, meets requirement, partially meets requirement, and does not meet requirement. Ms. Jensen reported that in ELA the class of 2025 has a 99% pass rate. She provided ELA, math and biology MCAS performance comparisons between Whittier and the State as well as comparisons between 8th grade versus 10th grade for ELA, math and biology. Ms. Jensen stated that the class of 2024 has a 99.7% pass rate and class of 2025 has a 96.6% pass rate. She reported on accountability and stated that in all three areas students declined in achievement but showed growth in English and math. Ms. Jensen reported that Whittier's graduation rate is 98.3%, drop out rate is 0.6%, chronic absenteeism exceeded target, advanced coursework exceeded target, assessment participation is 100% and accountability percentile is 68%. There was a question and answer session that followed her presentation.

Ms. Amanda Crosby and Mr. Paul Moskevitz, Vocational/Technical Coordinators provided a review of the vocational/technical programs according to the annual agenda. They provided a PowerPoint presentation to the Committee. Mr. Moskevitz provided an update on community events/projects. He reported the following events/projects: carpentry is constructing raised gardens for Community Action in Haverhill and installed them on the newly completed Rail Trail; the carpentry department along with CAD Drafting will design and complete plans for a handicapped ramp and stairs at the Georgetown Water Department; masonry will collaborate with Haverhill DPW to work on a rebuild entryway to the Rock Village Bridge Museum; over the summer, the CTI carpentry program built a storage shed on site at Veasy Park; Whittier has been selected to decorate a Big Dog on the Bradford Commons in Haverhill, October 28-October 30th; and Whittier will be participating in the 2023 Santa Parades in Haverhill and Merrimac. Mr. Moskevitz provided a cooperative education update. He reported that as of October 11, 2023, 165 students signed out for co-op. Whittier has adopted a "New" Cooperative Education Manual which includes Agreements, Rules & Regulations and Important Information for Parents. Mr. Moskevitz reported that Whittier

has many new co-op employers and have been adding new employers weekly. The senior vocational instructors have been participating in site visits to employers so that they have a direct contact person at Whittier. Whittier also has a “new” Agreement with the Massachusetts Division of Apprenticeship Standards with the Electrical Department. Mr. Moskevitz provided an OSHA update. He stated that 300 juniors will complete their OSHA 10 hour credentials; 286 sophomores will complete their Hot Work certification in applicable areas; HVAC-R students will pass their OSHA 10 hour credentials and Hot Work certification during their sophomore year; and during the 22-23 school year, 17 students passed the EPA (40 CFR Part 82, Subpart F) under Section 608 - Technician certification of the Clean Air Act. This will be offered again this school year along with A2L - Flammable Refrigerant Certification to increase a new approach to making this certification possible to a greater number of students. Mr. Moskevitz provided program updates. He reported that the construction craft laborer, Chapter 74 program application has been started and will be finalized in the spring of 2024. He stated that they continued implementation of the freshmen wildcat speaker series and have four speakers for the 2023-2024 school year. This speaker series is to showcase the successes of Whittier alumni. He reported on the freshmen safety shoe program with Brunt Work Wear in North Reading. He stated that approximately 68 students received safety shoes/boots donated by Brunt to assist in the freshmen dress expectations. Ms. Amanda Crosby provided an update on the adult evening program. She reported that there are 269 electrical and plumbing students enrolled in theory classes. The plumbing tier 5 course is the largest class, with 41 students enrolled in the course. The cosmetology licensure classes will finish on Thursday, October 18th. The next class will begin in January 2024 and there is currently a waitlist. The Adult Education Program is offering four (4) new courses in the fall: HVAC-R, Bee Keeping, Basic Sewing and three (3) cooking classes. The evening program is also offering basic masonry, basic woodworking and certified nursing assistant again this fall. Ms. Lowell asked that the enrollment numbers for each of the communities in the Whittier District be provided to school committee members. Whittier will be hosting the Introduction to Becoming a Public Water System Operator course. This course prepares students for the Grade 1 Treatment and Distribution Water Operator Examination and is offered by the Massachusetts Water Works Association using Whittier to hold the class. Whittier is offering a 300 hour welding career training program this fall through the NAMC (Northeast Advanced Manufacturing Consortium) grant for the underemployed and unemployed. This program includes career workshops and job placement assistance upon completion. The Adult Education Program will be offering CTI training during the summer of 2024 in Advanced Manufacturing, Auto Body, Carpentry, Construction Craft Laborers, Culinary, Electrical, Marine Technology, Plumbing and Welding. Ms. Crosby provided a CVTE exploratory program update. She stated that for the third year, Whittier will offer a senior exploratory program for seniors from sending community high schools who expressed an interest in entering the trades upon graduation. This is offered at no cost to the sending high schools. Whittier has invited the guidance

counselors from the sending high schools to discuss this program on October 12th in hopes to increase student participation. Last school year, students from Haverhill and Triton spent their morning at Whittier exploring one vocational program per week for eight (8) weeks. Upon completion of the exploratory program, all of the students enrolled and completed one of the summer CTI training programs. These programs offered 200 hours of no cost training in a trade area, career counseling and job placement assistance. Ms. Crosby provided an update on the Skills Capital Grant. She reported that Whittier was awarded \$499,461 from the grant for equipment upgrades in automotive technology and health assisting. She stated that \$226,073 was used in the automotive technology program to implement equipment needed for electrical vehicle maintenance. She stated that \$273,388 was used in the health assisting program to purchase an Anatomage Virtual Dissection Table system. Whittier will continue to seek Skills Capital Grant funding as it becomes available to update equipment for the vocational programs.

Ms. Morrison provided the October 1, 2023 School Census. For informational purposes, she also provided the October 1, 2022 School Census report and a comparison between the two years. She stated that the numbers are tentative until the State commits to Whittier's submission at the end of the month. Currently, the Special Education population is at 16.4%, which is 0.9% lower than last year's percentage of 17.3%. Ms. Lowell asked if other vocational schools are seeing a decline in the special education population. Ms. Morrison stated she would check with them at her next special education meeting.

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

Mr. Chris Laganas, the Principal/Asst. Superintendent, provided an update. He reported that the 50th Anniversary/Athletic Hall of Fame Dinner will be held Friday, October 13th at 6:00 pm at the Haverhill Country Club. It will be a celebration of the past 50 years of Whittier's existence and honoring the Hall of Fame inductees. The homecoming dance will be held Friday, October 20th from 7-10 pm. This is for Whittier students only. Open House will be held Sunday, November 5th from 1-4 pm. This year it is open to 8th grade students and their parents/guardians. The guidance department is working with college admissions representatives throughout the school year. The college fair will be held on October 19th in the gymnasium. The PSAT will be administered at Whittier on October 24th and October 25th. There will be approximately 156 sophomores and juniors taking the exam. Mr. Laganas reported that there was an A.L.I.C.E. drill on October 11th to learn the protocols. He stated that they are enhancing the cessation program with the three new adjustment counselors. They are ready to introduce "iDecide". Mr. Laganas stated that the adjustment counselors have researched another program which is a drug education curriculum geared towards intervention, diversion and empowerment to replace the "Breath" program.

## BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Kara Kosmes, the Business Manager provided the five-year capital plan for the Committee's review according to the annual agenda. This serves as a planning document that is updated each year to project the District's capital needs over a 5 year period and is used in the budget development process. Several of the items on the list are expected to be funded through grants. Whittier has been approached again by the anonymous donor who donated \$350,000 in FY23 and they have asked us to submit another equipment proposal to them for FY25. Those requests total \$445,740 and have the letters AG next to their description. The District has also submitted a Mass Skills Capital grant (denoted by the letters MSG) in the amount of \$449,846 for culinary replacement equipment and materials and a detailed listing of those requests can be found on the last page of the 5 year capital plan. Ms. Kosmes stated that one very important thing to note is that building capital needs are not listed on the 5 year capital plan as they will be part of the MSBA new building project for which a district wide vote is planned in January 2024. In the event that the vote is not successful, the Superintendent and Ms. Kosmes will be providing the school committee with a multi-year capital building improvement plan at the February 2024 school committee meeting. Ms. Kosmes provided the variance analysis from July through September. She stated that quarterly transfers within the major functional categories have been made to balance accounts. The transfers are needed due to the fact that the FY24 budget was prepared in January 2023 for the following school year and was based on FY23 staffing and shop enrollments that existed at the time.

## COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

Mr. James went over the annual agenda items for November. Ms. Lynch asked if the technology update can be moved to a later date while a new Director of Technology gets acclimated to the job.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Murphy to move the review and update of the technology plan to a later date. Unanimous

## SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Executive Subcommittee has not met.



The Instructional Subcommittee has not met. They will meet on November 1, 2023 at 4 p.m.

The Plant Operations Subcommittee has not met.

The Salary & Negotiations Subcommittee has not met.

The Policy Subcommittee met October 11, 2023 to review policies from MASC. The policies will be brought to the full Committee in November for a first reading.

#### MEETING DATES

The Regular School Committee meeting is Monday, November 6, 2023 at 6:30 pm.

#### NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business posted. Mr. Irving informed the Committee of the eight (8) resolutions that will be discussed and voted on at the MASC/MASS conference in November. He stated that if anyone had any concerns on any of them to reach out to him.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no Executive Session posted.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Wood to adjourn at 8:37 P.M.

Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,  
*Lisa Rand*  
Recording Secretary