



WHITTIER REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

A regular meeting of the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School Committee was held remotely on **Thursday, November 12, 2020** via ZOOM Teleconferencing per Governor Baker's Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A sec. 20.

Members Present: Charlie LaBella Ron Fitzgerald Ben Fichera (6:45)
Richard Early Lisa O'Connor JoAnn Testaverde
Brett Murphy Johanna True Chip O'Connor
Dave Irving Garry James Tony LeSage

Members Absent: Paul Tucker, Scott Wood

Others Present: Maureen Lynch, Superintendent
Kara Kosmes, Business Manager
Chris Laganas, Principal
Kelly Fay, Coordinator of Curriculum & Staff Development
Kevin Williams, Director of Technology & Information Systems
Alyssa Michel, Student Representative

Mr. Murphy stated that the meeting was being recorded and held remotely via ZOOM Teleconferencing. Per Governor Baker's order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30A, Section 20, the public was not allowed to physically access the meeting. However, Public Comment was made available via email in advance of the meeting start time and/or prior to Public Comment. The meeting was available for the public to view live via: <https://www.youtube.com/c/WhittierTechHighSchool> Mr. Murphy called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M. Mr. Murphy took attendance. Mr. Murphy began the meeting with the pledge of allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Murphy asked if there was any public comment. There was an email from Marie Katzen that Mr. Murphy read aloud. (see attached email) Mr. Murphy stated the Board is not ready to comment on that right now. However, Ms. Lynch may have more answers during her report.

By motion of Dr. Testaverde, seconded by Mr. James to approve the Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting for October 14, 2020 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. LeSage, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to accept the Treasurer's Report for October 2020 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business posted.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Alyssa Michel, provided an update on student clubs. The Key Club has already had a remote meeting. They are working out details on how to do service while maintaining the safety protocols set up by the State and Whittier. They are also working on plans that allow them to do service on their own, such as making cards and posters for children in the hospital or writing cards for servicemen and women overseas. Their next meeting is scheduled for next week. DECA will be competing at the District level virtually. The Interact Club is looking for opportunities to engage with the community remotely. They will be meeting with the Haverhill Rotary Club next week to discuss additional opportunities. Student Government has officers from the senior and junior classes and are taking volunteers from the sophomore and freshman classes. They hope to hold elections this winter. This week, the Student Government is celebrating our veterans in honor of Veteran's Day. GSA has been meeting remotely since the beginning of the school year. One of their members represents Whittier on the GSA Leadership Council sponsored by DESE and the Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth. Chess Club will be held virtually through an online platform. A google site will also be used for club information and google meets. The Multicultural Club had their first virtual meeting, Thursday, November 12th. They will meet every Thursday from 2-3 pm. The Multicultural Club seeks to cultivate a love for diversity and an appreciation for other cultures in the school community. Peer Leadership is working on recruiting new members. They have 28 members and hope to get more as the year progresses. At their first meeting, they will discuss plans to reach out to freshmen to help them acclimate to Whittier culture in the hybrid model. They will also begin to hold leadership training workshops to help peer leaders develop new skills.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Personnel Action

The Superintendent, Maureen Lynch reported on the hiring of a mathematics/special education instructor LTS, a teaching assistant, a school physician, a route bus driver, a concurrent enrollment liaison, IT specialists, a portfolio liaison, above the influence

program manager, above the influence advisors, an AP liaison and class/club advisors. She also reported on the resignation of a route bus driver and special education instructor for retirement purposes.

Budget Update

Ms. Lynch reported that Kara Kosmes, the Business Manager, would be going over the budget timeline for FY22.

MCAS Update

Ms. Lynch reported that juniors will take the ELA and the math MCAS on their assigned hybrid days between January 14 and January 29. This will be the legacy standards but an online test. The sophomores will take the ELA and math MCAS on their assigned hybrid days between May 18-28. This will be the MCAS 2.0 and an online test. All freshmen will take the science MCAS on their assigned hybrid days in late May or early June. No dates have been set yet. This will be the MCAS 2.0 and an online test.

Superintendent's Update

Ms. Lynch provided an update. On Thursday, October 15, 2020, she attended the MSBA Owner's Project Manager remote roundtable meeting along with Kara Kosmes the Business Manager. On Tuesday, October 20, 2020, she attended the MAVA Officers' remote meeting where they continue to have discussions around statewide admission policies. On Friday, October 23, 2020, she attended the remote MAVA meeting with Superintendents and Attorney Paige Tobin to discuss admissions concerns statewide. On Tuesday, October 27, 2020, she attended the Northeast Workforce Regional Planning remote meeting. On Wednesday, October 28, 2020, she attended the remote MAVA Officers' meeting, Board of Directors' meeting and General Membership meeting. Secretary Acosta spoke about the expansion of vocational education in Massachusetts. On Monday, November 2, 2020, she attended a remote meeting with Commissioner Jeff Riley regarding the new color coding of the COVID 19 map. On Tuesday, November 3, 2020, she attended the remote MAVA check-in meeting with Kevin Farr from MAVA, Jon Evans, President of MAVA, Superintendent of Keefe Tech, Elizabeth Bennett and Cliff Chuang, Associate Commissioner of CTE. On Tuesday, November 10, 2020, she attended the MVSA remote roundtable meeting. Discussion was around how to increase schools capacity using CDC guidance and the 6 feet rule along with bus transportation. Ms. Lynch provided a COVID 19 update. She reported that to date 8 students have tested positive; 4 staff (1 teacher, 3 other) have tested positive and 39 have quarantined as closed contacts (3 of them were staff members). The Governor has asked schools to try to increase their capacity for students at schools. Whittier continues to look at ways to be creative and provide more in-person learning but it needs to be done in a safe way for students and staff.

Dr. Kelly Fay, Coordinator of Curriculum and Staff Development provided an academic update through a PowerPoint presentation. She reported that over the summer, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Task Force meetings were held. At these meetings, they discussed and implemented school-wide learning procedures and protocols that standardized education practices for both the academic side and vocational side even further than in the past. Throughout the summer daily professional development for the staff on how to utilize various forms of technology in their classroom/technical area were offered. Dr. Fay reported that for this school year, all students are taking all 4 core academic areas of English, math, science and social studies and their technical area. All academic classes are 70 minutes long which has added instructional time to some classes like science and social studies. Through a grant opportunity online supplemental materials that can be used to support and enhance in-person learning were purchased. Dr. Fay reported on the Wildcat Online Academy. She stated that students who have chosen to work completely at home are in this Academy and are using the Edgenuity Program. Edgenuity is an approved remote learning partner of the Massachusetts DESE. The program was purchased utilizing Title I funding. Students use the Edgenuity program for their academic classes in English, math science and social studies. On the vocational side, the students work remotely with their vocational/technical instructors. Dr. Fay provided a course progression update. She reported that Whittier is in year two of the approved history/social studies pathway; year three of the approved science pathway and year four of the approved mathematics pathway. Dr. Fay provided a professional development update. She stated that the school year began with 10 days of professional development. This was provided in-person, hybrid and remotely to the staff. Professional development opportunities included topics such as: important school and legal information, powerschool training, technology training, cultural sensitivity and equity and student and staff well-being. Professional development also included a presentation from Dr. Adolph Brown. The focus of this was on the staff, not students. Dr. Fay reported that most staff members left the presentation stating that it was the best professional development session they have ever attended. There was discussion after her presentation. The Committee commended Dr. Fay on her presentation.

Ms. Lynch stated she would like any future snow days to become remote school days for this school year. This will allow for no interruption in learning and provide continuity in student progress.

By motion of Dr. Testaverde, seconded by Ms. True to approve the Superintendent's recommendation for snow days to become remote school days for the 2020-2021 school year. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Ms. Lynch reported that at this time, winter sports are doubtful because of the continuing rise in COVID 19 cases in the community. This is hard for the school community but keeping the priority of receiving as much in-person learning needs to continue to be the focus.

Mr. Kevin Williams, Director of Technology and Information Systems provided a technology update through a PowerPoint presentation. He reported that Whittier contracted with Power School to implement 5 modules to replace 5 separate systems. He stated that the 5 modules include: SIS (School Information System; Special Education System; Teacher Evaluation System; Student Assessment System and an Admission System. At the same time, they also looked at other systems that are compatible with Power School and added the ClassLink Integration System that organizes all online learning apps and replaced ConnectEd with School Messenger. Mr. Williams reported that due to the COVID 19 pandemic they began a phased install approach in March 2020. The Admissions system is the final system and he hopes to start installation in January 2021. Mr. Williams reported on remote support. He stated his team was able to provide support to students and staff during lock-down, hybrid and remote learning periods; provide learning resources for staff and students to remotely learn new skills via YouTube videos; train on new systems; maintain the infrastructure to allow for access to all systems and provide community based updates to families. Mr. Williams thanked Lisa Belfiore, Network Support Specialist and Rich Porcelli, Media Specialist for all their help. He could not have done this without their support. There was discussion after Mr. Williams' presentation. The Committee commended Mr. Williams on his presentation.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Mr. Chris Laganas, the Principal provided a principal's update. He reported that the in-person hybrid learning model continues to be successful. Whittier is finishing up eight weeks in this model of learning. He thanked everyone for their flexibility, creative problem solving and teamwork. Mr. Laganas reported that staff members continue to train staff with creative professional development and thanked all the trainers. This continues to help with academic growth. Mr. Laganas reported that due to the upcoming holidays that fall on Wednesdays, the hybrid in-person learning calendar has been adjusted. Group B students will report to school for in-person learning on the following days so they do not lose three days of face-to-face time with their instructors: Monday, November 9th; Monday November 23rd; and Monday, December 21st. Group A students will be remote asynchronous, just as they would on any normal Wednesday/Friday those three Mondays. Virtual Clubs will be starting soon. These clubs will be very important for the student body's emotional connections. The Wildcat Conditioning Club began last week on Wednesday and Thursday. Approximately 75 students participated between the two cohorts. Using the brand new turf field,

Coach Little and Coach Bradley were able to set up individual boxes for each student that are approximately 5 yds wide by 15 yds long. Workouts are approximately 1 hour and staff driven. Students go through a full active stretch period first and then perform a series of functional exercises that are followed by an agility period. Whittier's first virtual open house was Sunday, November 1st. This link is available on Whittier's home page. Mr. Laganas thanked Mr. Porcelli, Mr. Moskevitz and all the staff members that were involved.

BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Kara Kosmes, the Business Manager provided an FY22 Budget Calendar with proposed dates to meet with the Executive Subcommittee in the design of budget for review and approval.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Ms.L. O'Connor to accept the proposed FY22 budget calendar as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Ms. Kosmes provided an update on the athletic field project. She reported that the third phase of the project was to finalize the 8 lane track. That was completed in August. One outstanding punch list item is for the contractor to reconnect the irrigation system to the upper field. Once that is complete, there will be an audit of the system by Traverse Landscape Architects to ensure that everything is in proper working order. Mr. Irving reminded the Committee that the Reorganization meeting has been scheduled for April 12th.

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

Mr. Murphy reported that there were no annual agenda items for December. Mr. Murphy reported that as Chair, he is going to remove himself from the Salary Negotiations Subcommittee. He stated that Mr. LaBella has offered to replace him on this Committee. Mr. Murphy appointed Mr. LaBella to the Salary Subcommittee.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Executive Subcommittee has not met.

The Instructional Subcommittee met on October 28, 2020.

By motion of Mr. LaBella, seconded by Dr. Testaverde to accept the minutes of October 28, 2020 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

The Plant Operations Subcommittee has not met.

The Salary & Negotiations Subcommittee met November 4, 2020.

By motion of Ms. True, seconded by Mr. James to accept the minutes of November 4, 2020 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

The Policy Subcommittee has not met. Mr. Irving asked Ms. Lynch to see if there are any policy updates coming from MASC.

MEETING DATES

The Regular School Committee meeting is December 9, 2020 at 6:30 pm.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business posted. Mr. Irving asked that an update on the Resolutions from the MASC/MASS Delegate meeting be put on the agenda next month under new business.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Murphy stated there is a need to enter into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with WREA – Teachers' Union as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the School Committee and upon completion of Executive Session will return to open session.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. James to enter into Executive Session. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

The Committee went into Executive Session at 7:54 P.M.

The Committee returned to Open Session at 8:13 P.M.

Mr. Murphy reported that in Executive Session the School Committee voted on a one-year contract extension and 3% salary increase for the WREA - Teachers' Union for the 2021-2022 school year.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. LeSage to approve a one (1) year contract extension and 3% salary increase for the WREA - Teachers' Union for the 2021-2022 school year as recommended by the Superintendent and approved by the Salary Negotiations subcommittee. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. LaBella, seconded by Mr. LeSage to adjourn at 8:15 PM.
Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Rand
Recording Secretary



Lisa Rand <lrاند@whittier.tec.ma.us>

Return to school full-time - Question for School Committee meeting

1 message

Marie Katzen <marie.katzen@gmail.com>
To: lrاند@whittier.tec.ma.us

Thu, Nov 12, 2020 at 3:58 PM

Good afternoon,

I don't see it on the agenda but I am wondering if there will be a discussion this evening about Governor Baker's desire for return to school full time - what does the Board think about that and how would it work? Do we have a timetable to discuss full in person or will we keep to hybrid for awhile/

Thank you,
Marie Katzen