



WHITTIER REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

A regular meeting of the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School Committee was held on **Monday, November 6, 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 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
 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. Mr. James reminded the public that public comment is not a discussion, debate or dialogue between them and the School Committee. It is an opportunity for them to express an opinion on issues with School Committee authority. He stated they would be allowed up to 3 minutes to present material and begin by stating their name and city/town. Cliff Pierce, Chairman of Selectman in Rowley introduced himself to the Committee. He was there to express his opinion on having a town by town vote tied to a debt exclusion. He stated having a districtwide vote will not provide a debt exclusion for the town and Rowley does not have the ability to pay for this project. Rowley will have to have cut services to pay its share of the project. He feels Whittier is not concerned by this and is appalled. Mayor Sean Reardon from Newburyport introduced himself to the Committee. He stated he echos some of things that Rowley just said. Mayor Reardon is a supporter of vocational education. He has been to Whittier approximately five times since he has been elected Mayor of Newburyport. However, the way this is set up is not fair. He wishes there was more collaboration. He stated if Whittier goes forward with the district wide vote that it will turn 11 communities against Whittier. He stated there is no financial mechanism attached to passing the project this way. He stated housing prices are already going up

along with taxes. He doesn't have the answers but stated it is a shame that all the good work that is being done at Whittier is going to get dragged through the mud because of the way the vote is set up. He asked the Committee to reconsider how they move forward. He also stated he was looking at the website and to consider adding contact information for school committee members.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Ms. Coppinger to approve the Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting for October 11, 2023 as presented.
Unanimous

By motion of Ms. True, seconded by Mr. Murphy to approve the Treasurer's Reports for September (corrected) and October 2023 as presented. Unanimous

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business posted.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Dawensky Gustave provided an update on sports and activities of the different clubs. Football has a record of 6-2 as they just won the CAC Championship this past weekend. They will be playing in the quarter finals of the State Vocational Playoffs some time next week. The boys soccer team wrapped its 2023 season with a record of 8-9-1. The girls soccer team ended their season on Monday. They moved into a higher division this season and ended with a record of 5-9-1.

The girls volleyball team finished the regular season with a 10 and 10 record. They qualified for the State Tournament but lost to a very strong Norton team ending their season. The boys and girls cross country teams have wrapped up their season and will now go to the Divisional meet. One of the girls was named the MVP of the CAC league and one of the boys set a new school record on the Wrentham course at the State Vocational Championships. The United Nations Club continues to meet regularly on Tuesday afternoons. They went to UMass Lowell for a Crisis conference on November 3rd and 4th. Students became characters in several different scenarios including the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Death of Stalin, and the Constitutional Convention. The GSA Club continues to meet regularly. Students made a ghost lollipop craft to celebrate Halloween. Advisors, Ms. Staunton and Mr. Charbonneau will be taking a group of Whittier Tech GSA students to Greater Lowell on November 9th for the Regional GSA Leadership Conference. In October, the Multicultural Club enjoyed a presentation by a junior, who spoke about her journey from San Francisco de Macoris, Dominican Republic to Haverhill.

In addition, their bi-weekly Book Chat enjoyed two multilingual poetry readings that everyone enjoyed. They are making plans to have a Culture Night at Parent's Night on Thursday, November 16th, from 4:30-6:00 p.m. The Interact club will be welcoming Rotarian Keith Harris speaking on November 7th, about RYLA scholarship opportunities. On November 9th, members and their advisor will be joining Superintendent Lynch and Ms. Crosby to the Rotary Annual Veterans breakfast at Haverhill Country Club, where a Whittier Tech student will be singing the National Anthem. The Chess club is in the midst of completing the first tournament of the year. It has been a very competitive tournament, and it looks like a 9th grader may win! In October, Student Government hosted a very successful Pep Rally and Homecoming dance. At the pep rally, the juniors had excellent representation in the events, but the seniors won after their fantastic efforts at tug of war. The dance was attended by almost 750 students and was a Hollywood Homecoming theme. They look forward to honoring our veterans in November. Ski Club trips have been planned and a basket raffle will run the month of November. The basket will include: 2 Lift tickets to Pats Peak, a ski hat, socks, and hand warmers. The Environmental Club has planted seedlings for the tower garden going into the Poet's Inn. They also created a social media post explaining the change in foliage for the sugar maple tree at the football field. The club will begin organizing a "soft plastic" collection drive to help recycle plastic not normally recycled in at-home recycling bins. Art Club students helped create wire pumpkins for this year's Big Dog Show. They are now moving on to exploring different mediums such as Charcoal, Oil Pastel, Water Color, and Chalk. The Yearbook committee met with the Josten's Representative to select the cover of this year's yearbook. Seniors are still submitting yearbook photos and so far they have received about 100 photos. For students who either cannot afford to have their picture taken outside of school or who have not yet had a chance to arrange it, our portrait studio will be set up in the lobby during lunches on November 2, 9, 17 & 20. The Poetry Club will be focusing on Halloween and Horror Poetry at their meeting this week. Specifically, Edgar Allen Poe and Robert Burns.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Personnel Action

The Superintendent, Maureen Lynch reported on the hiring of a concurrent enrollment liaison, an early college program manager, an artificial intelligence (AI) specialist and an AP liaison.

Budget Update

Ms. Lynch reported that Kara Kosmes would be presenting the FY25 budget timeline.

MCAS Update

Ms. Lynch reported that on November 8th and 9th, one (1) junior will retake the ELA MCAS exam. On November 14th and 15th, 11 juniors will retake the math MCAS exam. Appeals have been filed for seven (7) juniors that have not passed the biology MCAS exam.

School Building Update

Ms. Lynch provided a building project update through a PowerPoint presentation. She stated that there are only two options; code compliance upgrade or a new school. She stated that on October 1, 2023 the anticipated district share was \$364 million for code compliance upgrade and \$302 million for a new school. However, on October 25th, MSBA increased their reimbursement rate for the project and the anticipated district share is \$264.1 million. Ms. Lynch showed the total project budget based on MSBA anticipated grant adjustment. She also provided information on what the next steps would be if the vote fails. The District will have to move forward with a code upgrade immediately. The projects that would need to be done immediately included a wastewater treatment plant at an estimated value of \$11,700,000; a sprinkler suppression system at an estimated value of \$12,100,00 and an access road at an estimated value of \$11,400,000. Once these code upgrades are completed the District will meet the 30% threshold of cost that would trigger a full ADA code and compliance upgrade required by law. Ms. Lynch provided the code upgrade cost and duration if the vote failed along with a conceptual schedule. She provided a tax assessment analysis between new construction versus a code upgrade.

Superintendent's Update

Ms. Lynch provided an update. On Thursday, October 12, 2023, she attended the MASS Executive Committee meeting in Marlboro. On Friday, October 13, 2023, she met with Pentucket Superintendent, Dr. Justin Bartholomew to discuss the building project. On Monday, October 16, 2023, she attended the Salisbury Selectmen meeting with Ron Fitzgerald, Kara Kosmes, Chris Laganas, David Saindon from leftfield, Doug Roberts from JCJ and Kristy Lyons from Consigli. On Tuesday, October 17, 2023, Whittier held the annual fall advisory board meeting. This was another opportunity to give a presentation on the building project. On Wednesday, October 18th, October 25th, and November 1st, she attended Whittier's weekly executive project meetings. On Thursday, October 19, 2023, there was a city/town clerk meeting at Whittier to discuss the anticipated district wide vote on January 23, 2024. On Monday, October 23, 2023, she attended the Merrimac Selectmen meeting with Mike Rossi, Kara Kosmes, Chris Laganas, David Saindon from Leftfield, Doug Roberts from JCJ and Kristy Lyons from Consigli. On Tuesday, October 24, 2023, she attended the remote school building

committee meeting. At this meeting, there was unanimous approval of submitting the Schematic Design to MSBA. On Tuesday, October 24, 2023, Whittier held a new building information session at the Rowley Public Library. Ms. Lynch thanked Dave and Donna Irving for attending the meeting along with Kara Kosmes and Chris Laganas and all attendees. On Wednesday, October 25, 2023, she attended the Merrimack Valley Roundtable meeting in Chelmsford. On Friday, October 27, 2023, Whittier held an Alumni Mixer at Mission Oak Grill in Newburyport. Ms. Lynch thanked Tia Gerber, and the culinary and hospitality departments for all of their hard work making it a success. On Monday, October 30, 2023, she attended the Rowley Selectboard meeting along with Dave Irving, Kara Kosmes, Chris Laganas, Katrina Jensen, and Kelly Fay. On Wednesday, November 1, 2023, Whittier held a new building information session at the Georgetown Public Library. On Sunday, November 5th Whittier had an annual Open House. There were many interactive displays, a principals meeting that discussed admissions and an informational session on the building project. Ms. Lynch reported that the 50th Anniversary/Athletic Hall of Fame celebration was held on Friday, October 13th. It was very well attended and a great time for all. They hope to do this every other year or so.

Ms. Lynch requested the school committee's approval of three (3) out of state field trip requests from the Ski Club for January 21, 2024 to Waterville Valley Ski Resort in Waterville Valley, NH; February 2, 2024 to Pats Peak Ski Area in Henniker, NH and March 3, 2024 to Sunday River in Newry, Maine.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Ms. Holaday to approve the three (3) out of state field trip requests from the Ski Club for January 21, 2024 to Waterville Valley Ski Resort in Waterville Valley, NH; February 2, 2024 to Pats Peak Ski Area in Henniker, NH and March 3, 2024 to Sunday River in Newry, ME as presented. Unanimous

Ms. Lynch requested the school committee's approval for out of state field trip requests from HVAC to go to Eastern Propane & Oil in Rochester, NH on January 11, 2024 (snow date January 25th) and January 18, 2024 (snow date February 15th) to tour and observe live training and demonstrations at their training facility in Rochester.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Ms. Holaday to approve the field trip requests from HVAC to go to Eastern Propane & Oil in Rochester, NH on January 11, 2024 (snow date January 25th) and January 18, 2024 (snow date February 15th) as presented. Unanimous

Dr. Kelly Fay Coordinator of Curriculum & Staff Development provided an Academic update through a PowerPoint presentation. She reported that the English Department and Special Education instructors who work with them, spent two (2) days in a professional learning community examining the current grade 10 incoming assessments. They also examined the recently released MCAS scores to see how students did so that the instructors could enhance their instructional practice and make modifications as needed. They continue to utilize the Common Lit Literacy program throughout all four grade levels. The English Department continues to focus on voice reading throughout all four grade levels. The math department is working to align their curriculum framework standards with the SkillsUSA technical standards. The math department implemented medical math this school year based on recommendations made by the educators in the Allied Health technical area. They work through solving medical calculations; they learn how to calculate dosages using scientific formulas, students review fractions, decimals, and percentages. Whittier continues to offer Advanced Placement Calculus AB class. Dr. Fay reported that Whittier is continuing with the STEM based grant program, offering free STEM- science, technology, engineering, math, advanced placement courses via a Massachusetts based non-profit Virtual High School. This year the following STEM AP classes through a DESE grant were added: AP chemistry for grades 11 and 12 and AP environmental science for grades 11 and 12. Dr. Fay reported that last year, Whittier was the recipient of the Mass Life Science Grant from DESE. Through this grant, the entire science department took part in a multi-day, multi-month hybrid professional development program in partnership with Wade Institute for Science Education. During these sessions, the instructors learned how to look at inquiry-based instructional strategies and examined how to move standard laboratory-based lessons into inquiry investigations. The instructors were also provided with sessions on inquiry-based pedagogy while developing phenomena-based units that focused on using storylines, a new concept to Whittier instructors to anchor understanding. Dr. Fay reported that the history department is in year two of implementation of the Savvas US History and World History Interactive curriculum program. During the school year, the history department learned how to utilize the program within their instructional practice. At the end of last school year, they re-worked existing curriculum in both US History and World History to ensure they were able to incorporate interactive curriculum based on the professional knowledge gained through the piloting/implementing year. The history department is continuing to implement the three-year civics engagement project. They capitalized on the 8th grade civics course offered at the middle school level and sent the incoming grade 9 students home from orientation with a planning and organizational tool to help begin the process.

They also continue to introduce the voter registration process to all students who are old enough to vote to increase civic participation. Dr. Fay reported that 12 students received the State Seal of Biliteracy and two of them received an award with distinction. Students who earn the State Seal of Biliteracy demonstrate the English and world language skills that are necessary to succeed in multilingual post-secondary academic and professional settings. Many colleges and universities throughout the Commonwealth are awarding credit or placement options to students who have earned the State Seal of Biliteracy. Dr. Fay reported on the Early College Program. She stated that Whittier is continuing to offer the program to both juniors and seniors. She reported on the courses offered to students and stated the classes are taken both hybrid and asynchronously. She stated that by graduation, a majority of the participating students earn 12 or more credits. One senior earned her associates degree in the class of 2023. Dr. Fay reported on the additional advanced placement courses that are offered to seniors. She provided a vocational technical curriculum update. She stated that this year, the DESE has partnered with NS4ED to assist them in developing the next generation of CTE frameworks. They have had statewide meetings on the new revision process with a focus on the workforce skills and knowledge demands needed by employers. They are examining the format and use of the most recently released frameworks to ensure they are reflective of industry needs and have asked schools to reach out to employers and advisory boards to encourage their involvement. Dr. Fay provided a curriculum update. She reported that two new full-year electives were added to the program of studies this year: SkillsUSA - Career Essentials and Communication Skills and Wellness/Lifetime Activities. This past spring/summer, a team of staff members overhauled the advisory program to make the activities and schedule more meaningful for students. The team developed a comprehensive 4-year program that meets not only current needs of students, but encourages them to think about their future. The curriculum also incorporates MyCAP (My Career Academic Plan) which is a planning tool/process that the DESE has developed to assist students in developing a plan for the future. Whittier was awarded a Financial Literacy Planning and Implementation grant. The grant was used to organize a Credit for Life Fair for all grade 11 students. Dr. Fay reported on the professional development. She stated that the following topics were included in the professional development carousel format to staff: the new advisory program, SkillsUSA, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Grading practices and weights, Instructional Technology, ALICE-school safety, Apple IDs & Notability and new building information.

PRINCIPAL/ASST. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Chris Laganas, the Principal/Asst. Superintendent, provided an update. Open House was Sunday, November 5th from 1-4 pm and was well attended. Only 8th graders and their families from the District were sent invitations to the Open House. The academic displays in the cafeteria and the vocational shop interactive presentations were amazing. This was Whittier's opportunity to showcase the many academic and

vocational offerings for prospective students and their families. Mr. Laganas thanked the Vocational Coordinators, Amanda Crosby and Paul Moskevitz, and the entire staff for their dedicated and diligent efforts in making this Open House a success. Middle School Tours start on November 7th and will run through mid-December. The tours will be completed before winter break. First Quarter is over and reports cards will be issued through PowerSchool on Thursday, November 9th. The Student Government will be making announcements Thursday, November 9th for Veterans Day in recognition of all the staff members who have served our country. Whittier Tech has also taken part in a "Parade of Flags". For the week preceding Veterans Day, a line of flags with names tags of veterans will be on display lining part of the Whittier driveway near Mega Kitty at the front of the school. Coffee House music will be held in the auditorium on Tuesday, November 7th at 7pm. Parents Night will be held on Thursday, November 16th from 5:30-7:30pm. Whittier continues its commitment to safety. A safety team meeting was held. In that meeting they discussed safety protocols and ways to enhance school safety at Whittier. The Booster Club is continuing their efforts for students. The snack shack will be open for Thursday's football game @ 6pm against Northeast Metro Regional Voc High School. Ms. Lynch stated that admissions applications were opened for students to apply for next school year on November 1st and as of November 6th Whittier has received 234 applications for next school year. Ms. Lynch reported that a community forum for the building project will be held on Thursday, November 16th in the auditorium from 7 pm - 8:30 pm. Mr. Early would like it to be put on Community TV for those that cannot attend.

BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Kara Kosmes, the Business Manager provided an FY25 Budget Calendar with the proposed calendar dates to meet with the Executive Subcommittee in the design of the budget for review and approval.

By motion of Mr. Murphy, seconded by Mr. Wood to approve the proposed FY25 budget calendar as presented. Unanimous

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

Mr. James reported that there were no annual agenda items for December.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Executive Subcommittee has not met.

The Instructional Subcommittee met on November 1, 2023. Ms. True stated at that meeting, Dr. Fay provided a curriculum update and Ms. Jensen provided an MCAS update. She also reported that she was elected chair of the instructional subcommittee at that meeting.

The Plant Operations Subcommittee has not met.

The Salary & Negotiations Subcommittee has not met.

The Policy Subcommittee met October 11, 2023. They will meet on December 13, 2023 at 6 p.m.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Wood to approve the minutes of October 11, 2023 as presented. Unanimous

The following policies were presented for a first reading: CL-Administrative Reports; GA-Personnel Policy Objectives; GCQC- Resignation of Professional Staff; GDQD- Suspension and Dismissal of Support Staff Members; JKA- Student Discipline/Special Needs Students; KCB- Community Involvement; GBA- Equal Employment Opportunity; GBEA- Staff Ethics/Conflict of Interest; GBEB- Staff Conduct; GBEC-Gifts to and Solicitations by Staff; GBEBD- Online Fundraising and Solicitations-Crowdfunding; GBEC- Drug-Free Workplace Policy; GBGB- Staff Personal Security and Safety; GBGE- Domestic Leave Policy; GBGF-Family & Medical Leave; GBI- Staff Participation in Political Activities; GBJ- Personnel Records; GCA-Professional Staff Positions; GCBA- Professional Staff Salary Schedules; GCBB- Employment of Principals; GCE-Professional Staff Recruiting/Posting of Vacancies; GCF-Professional Staff Hiring; GCG-Substitute Professional Staff Employment; GCIA-Philosophy of Staff Development; GCJ-Professional Teacher Status; HA-Negotiations Goals; HB-Negotiations Legal Status; and HF-School Committee Negotiating Agents; Cash Reserves and Debt Management

By motion of Ms. L. O'Connor, seconded by Ms. Lowell to approve CL-Administrative Reports; GA-Personnel Policy Objectives; GCQC- Resignation of Professional Staff; GDQD- Suspension and Dismissal of Support Staff Members; JKA- Student Discipline/Special Needs Students; KCB- Community Involvement; GBA- Equal Employment Opportunity; GBEA- Staff Ethics/Conflict of Interest; GBEB- Staff Conduct; GBEC-Gifts to and Solicitations by Staff; GBEBD- Online Fundraising and Solicitations-Crowdfunding; GBEC- Drug-Free Workplace Policy; GBGB-Staff Personal Security and Safety; GBGE- Domestic Leave Policy; GBGF-Family & Medical Leave; GBI- Staff Participation in Political Activities; GBJ- Personnel Records; GCA-Professional Staff Positions; GCBA- Professional Staff Salary Schedules; GCBB- Employment of Principals; GCE-Professional Staff Recruiting/Posting of Vacancies; GCF-Professional Staff Hiring; GCG-Substitute Professional Staff Employment;

GCIA-Philosophy of Staff Development; GCJ-Professional Teacher Status; HA-Negotiations Goals; HB-Negotiations Legal Status; and HF-School Committee Negotiating Agents; Cash Reserves and Debt Management for a first reading as presented. Unanimous

MEETING DATES

The Regular School Committee meeting is Wednesday, December 13, 2023 at 6:30 pm.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business posted. Mr. Irving stated that he is going to the MASC/MASS conference on November 7th along with Ms. True. They will be attending the dinner on Thursday night. At that meeting, Senator Bruce Tarr is being honored.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no Executive Session posted.

By motion of Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Irving to adjourn at 7:45 P.M.
Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Rand
Recording Secretary