



WHITTIER REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

A regular meeting of the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School Committee was held remotely on **Wednesday, April 8, 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: Chip O'Connor Tony LeSage Ron Fitzgerald
 Scott Wood Richard Early Lisa O'Connor
 Brett Murphy Johanna True JoAnn Testaverde
 Dave Irving Garry James Charlie LaBella
 Ben Fichera^(6:45)

Members Absent: Paul Tucker

Others Present: Maureen Lynch, Superintendent
 Chris Laganas, Principal
 Kara Kosmes, Business Manager
 Patricia Lowell, Director of Pupil Personnel

Mr. Murphy stated that this meeting is 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 this meeting. However, Public Comment was made available via ZOOM Teleconferencing as well as through email in advance of the meeting start time and/or prior to Public Comment. Mr. Murphy called the meeting to order at 6:34 P.M. Mr. Murphy began the meeting with the pledge of allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

By motion of Mr. LeSage, seconded by Mr. Wood to approve the Minutes of the Budget Workshop for March 11, 2020 as presented. Approved by roll call vote - 4 Abstained (C. LaBella, D. Irving, J. Testaverde, G. James)

By motion of Ms. L. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. LeSage to approve the Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting for March 11, 2020 as presented. Approved by roll call vote - 2 Abstained (D. Irving, G. James)

By motion of Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. LeSage to accept the Treasurer's Report for March 2020 as presented. Approved by roll call vote - 1 Abstained (G. James)

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Murphy reported that he has not received many school committee self-evaluation forms to date. He asked members that have not passed one in to do so prior to May 1, 2020. The form is available on Google Classroom.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

There was no student representative report.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Personnel Action

The Superintendent, Maureen Lynch reported on the hiring of two (2) mathematics instructors and attendance make-up monitors.

Budget Update

The Public Hearing on the FY21 budget was held April 8th and the budget books will be distributed to cities and towns.

MCAS Update

Ms. Lynch reported that there was no ELA testing in March for Grade 10 students. Additionally, the Accountability will be changed this year for attendance and MCAS.

Superintendent's Update

Ms. Lynch provided an update. She stated that on March 12th, the day after the school committee meeting, I was asked to attend a meeting with the Mayor of Amesbury to discuss concerns about the Coronavirus. Before she left to attend that meeting, the Whittier Tech Administrative Team was proactive and planned for a possible school closure and started working on developing a plan for distance learning. The team met for approximately 3 hours. After school on Thursday, there was an emergency cluster

chair meeting to review the administration's remote learning plan. All Administrators and Cluster Chairs were able to discuss and begin to plan for a possible school closure. At the end of the school day on March 12th an announcement was made to all students and staff reminding them to bring home their iPads and chargers. On the evening of March 12th, Ms. Lynch received a phone call from the Superintendent of Haverhill about a possible case of CoronaVirus and one of our students being exposed. The decision was made to close for Friday, March 13th. On March 13th, there was a teleconference meeting with the Commissioner with all the Superintendents in the state. At that time, it was left up to individual districts as to whether they would close their schools or not. Immediately after that call members of the North Shore Superintendent Roundtable and Merrimack Valley Superintendent Roundtable met via Zoom. It was discussed by both groups that we should all close for two weeks. On Sunday, March 15th Governor Baker closed all schools in the Commonwealth for 3 weeks or until April 6th. On Monday, March 16th the school was open for staff and students to pick up any of their personal belongings due to the school now being closed for 3 weeks. On Monday, March 16th the Administrative Team and the Cluster Chairs met again and finalized the Remote Learning Plan. The District was able to begin working with students on March 18th. Ms. Lynch could not express the gratitude she has for the faculty and staff. When faced with this adversity everyone came together to do what is best for the students. There have been some adjustments to the plan and there will continue to be adjustments, but everyone has been more than willing to adapt. One of the biggest concerns was making sure the students were fed. Ms. Lynch thanked Kara Kosmes for her work to make sure the students were taken care of. Also, all of the District Superintendents have worked together to ensure that all students in the 11 cities and towns have been able to receive access to breakfast and lunch. Ms. Lynch stated that Kevin Williams has done a phenomenal job sharing information on ConnectED and on the Whittier Website. They have tried to communicate consistently and often so the Whittier Tech Community is aware of information, concerns and expectations on remote learning during the school closure. All the information is posted on the website. Ms. Lynch thanked Bob Hardy and the maintenance team for their hard work in making sure Whittier Tech is as clean as it possibly can be. Bob Hardy has offered to help disinfect some of the local police and fire departments. He has been to Amesbury, Rowley, Newbury, and West Newbury. He did a lot of this work on his own time. She wanted to publicly thank Bob. Ms. Lynch reported that on March 25th, Governor Baker extended the school closure, until May 4th. At this time, there is a rotating schedule with maintenance, security, transportation and cafeteria where they are all working and providing a service to the school and/or community. All staff will be taking April vacation off including administrators, faculty, support staff and maintenance.

Ms. Lynch stated that the staff has embraced this time for Remote Learning with the priority of making sure the students social emotional needs are met. For the last few years much of the professional development has been on technology and social emotional learning. Ms. Lynch is happy to see those initiatives being used during this time. They will continue to improve and make adjustments to the plan as the school closure continues. Again, Ms. Lynch stated she could not be prouder of everyone in the Whittier Tech Community...”we truly are Whittier Tech!” Ms. L. O’Connor thanked Whittier for their help in the Pentucket School District communities. Ms. Lynch provided an update on the Student Opportunity Act. She stated that the Act is posted on Whittier’s website. She asked school committee members to take a look at it and let her know if there is anything they would like to add to it. She will bring it to the Committee for a final vote at a later date.

Ms. Patricia Lowell, Director of Pupil Personnel Services provided an Admissions Update. She provided the admission report for the 2020-2021 school year. She reported that in the first year of Whittier’s new admission policy, 593 applications were processed compared to 531 in the 2019-2020 school year. The applications were rank-ordered and 393 applications have been initially accepted for a possible 350 seats for the Class of 2024. The rank order list will continue to be reviewed as seats are determined to be available between April and September 2020. Mr. Early asked if there are more than 350 students accepted will Whittier be able to accommodate those students. Ms. Lowell stated they will figure out a way.

PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

Mr. Chris Laganas, the Principal provided a principal’s update. He reported that the winter sports banquet scheduled for March 12th was cancelled due to the COVID -19. Mr. Laganas congratulated all the winter athletes and coaches and gave a special thanks to the Booster Club for putting in all the hard work for the student athletes. He congratulated all the students involved in the musical “Pippin” for practicing all those long hours. He reported that once again during these unprecedented times the Whittier family continues to shine. The remote learning journey has been successful. The staff continues to provide an opportunity for students to stay connected and to continue learning. The Administration continues to work on reporting out and updating Whittier’s remote learning plan. Mr. Laganas stated that fortunately all Whittier Tech students have school issued iPads. He thanked Superintendent Lynch, the School Committee and IT Director Kevin Williams for this.

BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Kara Kosmes, the Business Manager thanked Kevin Welch, Food Service Director and Whitson's for their help with food for students during these unprecedented times. She provided the Variance Analysis according to the Annual Agenda. She reported that prior to the school closing expenditures were on track. She anticipated savings in many accounts due to the school closure and these savings can be utilized for any unanticipated expenditures that may incur as a result of the extended school closure. Dr. Testaverde stated that the food service company has done a fantastic job!

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

Mr. Murphy went over the annual agenda items for May. He stated the appointment of subcommittees will be put on hold until October. He stated they will remain the same until that time. Mr. Murphy stated they needed to vote on a new date for the annual reorganization of the Committee. He asked the Committee about September 30, 2020 at 5:30 PM.

By motion of Dr. Testaverde, seconded by Mr. James to move the date of the annual organization meeting to September 30, 2020 at 5:30 PM. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Mr. Murphy thanked the Administration, staff and students for their efforts in making this remote learning process a success. Everyone has done a great job!

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Executive Subcommittee has not met.

The Instructional Subcommittee has not met.

The Plant Operations Subcommittee has not met.

The Salary & Negotiations Subcommittee has not met. They will meet April 27, 2020 at 5:30 PM.

The Policy Subcommittee has not met. They will meet April 27, 2020 at 6:00 PM.

MEETING DATES

The Regular School Committee meeting is May 13, 2020 at 6:30 pm.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business posted.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no Executive Session posted.

Mr. LaBella asked if the completion of the track is still on schedule. Ms. Kosmes stated as of right now yes but she is not sure if that will be the case at the end of June/July. She will update the Committee when she receives confirmation.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. LeSage to adjourn at 7:02 P.M.
Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Rand
Recording Secretary