



## WHITTIER REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

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A regular meeting of the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School Committee was held remotely on **Wednesday, May 13, 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  
Ben Fichera    Richard Early (6:38)    Lisa O'Connor  
Brett Murphy    Johanna True    JoAnn Testaverde  
Dave Irving    Garry James    Charlie LaBella

Members Absent: Scott Wood, Paul Tucker

Others Present: Maureen Lynch, Superintendent  
Chris Laganas, Principal  
Kara Kosmes, Business Manager  
Tammy D'Entremont, Comptroller

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 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 6:31 P.M. Mr. Murphy began the meeting with the pledge of allegiance.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Murphy asked if there was any public comment. He reported that per the public comment policy, public comment shall not exceed 20 minutes and speakers will be allowed up to three (3) minutes to present their material. There was no public comment. Mr. Murphy stated that there were letters received and will be recorded into the minutes.

By motion of Mr. LeSage, seconded by Mr. Irving to approve the Minutes of the Public Hearing on the 2020-2021 Budget for April 8, 2020 as presented.  
Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Ms. L. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. LeSage to approve the Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting for April 8, 2020 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

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

## OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Murphy reported that eight (8) school committee members turned in their school committee self-evaluation forms and that the results were provided in the packet. He asked if there were any questions or comments.

By motion of Mr. LaBella, seconded by Mr. LeSage to accept the evaluation results of the School Committee Self-Evaluation into record. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

## STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

There was no student representative report. Ms. Lynch acknowledged Catherine McNulty at this time. Catherine did an amazing job as the Student Representative. She was a two (2) time statewide wrestling champion and will be attending Indiana Tech in the fall. The Committee thanked her and wished her well in the future.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

### Personnel Action

There was no personnel action.

### Budget Update

Ms. Lynch reported that there was not any new information on the budget from the legislature. She stated that Whittier will be starting the new fiscal year with a 1/12 budget that will be set by the Commissioner of Education because of the inability to have local town meetings. Most, if not all, Regional Schools are in this position. She will be requesting an Executive Sub-Committee meeting for next week.

### MCAS Update

Ms. Lynch reported that on Tuesday, May 12, 2020, 14 students took the AP calculus test online.

### Superintendent's Update

Ms. Lynch provided an update. She stated that this is the 8th week of remote learning for Whittier. She also reported that the School District will not open up for the rest of the year. She will know more about the summer after hearing the Governor's announcement on Monday, May 18th. At this time, the Discovery Program has been canceled and they are waiting for further guidance on being able to open for Summer Enrichment Programs. As far as the Evening Programs: Electrical and Plumbing started remote learning as of this past Monday. All students started their class time on a GoogleMeet and then they completed work on their own. Plumbing will be done at the end of next week. Electrical will be done by the end of June. Personal Enrichment Courses were refunded. There has been much discussion at the state level about how schools can open safely in the fall. Ms. Lynch reported that Whittier is in the process of setting up two health rooms for the fall. One room for students that are not feeling well and another room for students that need medications, bandaids, etc. There are many other ideas that are being worked through, but they are looking forward to guidance from the State. Ms. Lynch reported that they continue to work on end of the year activities and how to honor students. She is appreciative of the staff and students for being flexible and doing the best they possibly can for the students during this time. She stated she is very proud of the Class of 2020!

Ms. Lynch provided a copy of the Student Opportunity Plan for SY 2021-2023 in the packet for a vote of the Committee. She stated the Student Opportunity Act was passed last year by legislation and a plan had to be established and submitted to the State on how Whittier plans to use the funds.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. LeSage to accept the Student Opportunity Plan for SY 2021-2023 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Ms. Lynch reported that given the in-district acceptances for incoming freshmen, there will be no seats for school choice students for the 2020-2021 school year.

By motion of Mr. LeSage, seconded by Mr. James to not allocate seats for school choice for the 2020-2021 school year unless the student began at Whittier and moved out of the District. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

#### PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Mr. Chris Laganas, the Principal provided a copy of the proposed 2020-2021 school calendar for approval.

By motion of Ms. L. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. LeSage to accept the proposed draft 2020-2021 school calendar tentatively as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

#### BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Kara Kosmes, the Business Manager reported on the audit reports for Whittier from Powers and Sullivan. Due to current circumstances, the School Committee was provided with electronic FY19 audit reports this year. The auditors have also provided a cover sheet with additional information outlined. Ms. Kosmes summarized the key points: The opinion on the financial statements is unmodified, which is a clean opinion and the best you can have; All reporting deadlines were met; Information received was accurate; and no material weaknesses were found. She stated that The Management letter addressed 3 items: 1) The FY18 management letter recommended that the District update its procedure manual for Internal Controls for Federal Grants. The Auditors found that the District has satisfactorily addressed this compliance recommendation. 2) The FY18 management letter referenced suggestions for management of the District's Student Activity fund. The Auditors reported that the District has satisfactorily addressed this compliance recommendation. 3) For FY19, the auditors have recommended that the District implement a comprehensive risk management process to mitigate the risk associated with cybersecurity. Prior to the closing of school in March, Ms. Kosmes was in the process of contacting firms who perform these types of assessments but this has been put on hold for now.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. LeSage to accept the auditor's report as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Ms. Kosmes provided a Whittier Tech Educational Foundation Update. She reported that the foundation recently voted to award a \$500 scholarship to a senior plumbing student in memory of David Dahlke. The foundation has received over \$1,500 in donations in memory of Superintendent Lynch's father. The Lynch family has requested that this money be designated for scholarships, so the foundation will award three (3) Jack Lynch Memorial Scholarships to graduates as follows – \$500 to a future teacher, \$500 to a most improved student and \$500 to a student for tradesperson tools. She also reported that the foundation is sponsoring a charity fundraiser in which Principal Laganas has agreed to cut his hair into a 1980's style mullet. To date, staff members have pledged over \$1,100 which will be used to offset student lunch balances and other student needs for those families who are experiencing financial difficulties right now. Details will follow on when and how this event will be happening! Ms. Kosmes thanked Principal Laganas for being such a good sport!

Ms. Kosmes provided an update on student lunch balances. She reported that at the suggestion of the Superintendent, they reached out to staff as well as parents whose children had funds remaining in their lunch accounts and asked if they might be willing to donate some or all of the remaining balance to help offset the accounts of those students and whose families are struggling to pay. To date, they have received over \$1,100 from staff members and over \$1,500 from families. On behalf of the members of the foundation, Ms. Kosmes thanked everyone for their generosity during these unprecedented times. Mr. C. O'Connor asked if Ms. Kosmes knew what the amount of the outstanding lunch balances totaled. She did not but would provide that information to him.

On behalf of the Whittier staff and senior class, Ms. Kosmes thanked Mr. Early for his ice cream donation! In appreciation of the Whittier staff, and in honor of the senior class, Mr. Early donated one free ice cream cone or slush from Biggarts ice cream to every staff member and every member of the senior class.

#### COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

Mr. Murphy went over the annual agenda items for June. He reported that the information for the Superintendent's Evaluation was provided in their packets. He also reported that the Superintendent Evaluation form can be found in Google Classroom. He asked members to fill it out and return it by June 1, 2020.

## SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Executive Subcommittee has not met. They will meet on May 20, 2020 at 6:30 pm.

The Instructional Subcommittee has not met.

The Plant Operations Subcommittee has not met. Ms. Lynch reported that maintenance is working on summer projects.

The Salary & Negotiations Subcommittee has not met.

The Policy Subcommittee met on April 30, 2020 to review/update policies from MASC.

By motion of Mr. LeSage, seconded by Mr. James to accept the minutes of April 30, 2020 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Mr. Irving stated that the following policies were provided in the School Committee packets for a first reading: BEDH, IE, ID, IGB, IHB, IHBEA, JB, JFBB, JH, JICH, JIH, JLCB, JLCC, JRA, JII, IC/ICA, JBB, JICFA, and JJH-R. He stated there will be a second reading at the June meeting. There were a few policies that were sent to the Attorney for review. Ms. Lynch will let the Policy Subcommittee know when she hears back.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. LeSage to approve policies BEDH, IE, ID, IGB, IHB, IHBEA, JB, JFBB, JH, JICH, JIH, JLCB, JLCC, JRA, JII, IC/ICA, JBB, JICFA, and JJH-R for a first reading as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

## MEETING DATES

The Regular School Committee meeting is June 10, 2020 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. LeSage to adjourn at 7:14 P.M.  
Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Respectfully submitted,  
*Lisa Rand*  
Recording Secretary



Lisa Rand <lrاند@whittier.tec.ma.us>

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## Graduation

1 message

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**Nick Tasca** <gatorhunter820@gmail.com>

Tue, May 12, 2020 at 9:15 PM

To: lrاند@whittier.tec.ma.us

Hi,

My name is Nicholas Tasca, and I am a senior at Whittier Tech. I think there are better options to provide a safe but in person graduation for myself and my classmates. I am not in support of the current plan for virtual graduation/real ceremony in May of 2021. I think graduation should be postponed to late summer and if the climate does not prevail at that time to have a traditional ceremony, then an alternative option such as small group social distanced graduations by week 1/week 2, or by shop, or by individual student should be put into place. Perhaps a drive in option like the image I've submitted below? There are too many options to entertain before saying it isn't possible. If most other schools can accommodate these types of alternatives including most locally Haverhill High, why can't Whittier? I want to walk away from my Whittier High School experience with pride and satisfaction, of which the current plans do not help me feel that way.

Please ladies and gentlemen of the Whittier School committee, step in and revise the current plans to something more relevant and satisfactory. I have not heard one of my classmates endorse the current plan.

Sincerely,  
Nicholas Tasca



19662.jpeg  
63K







Lisa Rand <lrاند@whittier.tec.ma.us>

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## Whittier Graduation

1 message

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Tracey Dupre <tracey@schylling.com>

Tue, May 12, 2020 at 8:46 AM

To: "lrاند@whittier.tec.ma.us" <lrاند@whittier.tec.ma.us>

Good Morning,

My name is Tracey Dupre and I have twin daughters that are due to graduate from Whittier. Both girls have worked hard over these past 4 years and deserve more than just a virtual graduation. If Haverhill High and other towns can figure it out so can't Whittier.

Ms. Lynch had already made up her mind to have a virtual graduation. I know this because my daughter in class secretary and I was working from home and heard the call. She told the kids this before they could even say anything. What was the point in having them on the call to discuss options when the plan was already decided.

We need help in getting this decision changed.

Thanks,

Tracey Dupre



Lisa Rand <lrاند@whittier.tec.ma.us>

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## Graduation

1 message

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**Brenda** <Proudmomof201860@aim.com>  
To: lrاند@whittier.tec.ma.us

Tue, May 12, 2020 at 8:29 AM

Hi my name is Brenda Coolen. My daughter Tabi is a senior. Can you please postpone graduation until sometime this summer instead of making these kids miss out on it. They have worked so hard for this. They shouldn't have to have a virtual now and walk the stage a year later after the class of 2021. It's not fair to them and to me it is a slap in the face to them. There are a lot of town in Massachusetts holding graduation this summer. Even Haverhill high who has a bigger class than Whittier has a plan to hold it this year. I think you guys should get the parents and students input on this. Thank you

Brenda L Coolen



Lisa Rand <lrاند@whittier.tec.ma.us>

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**(no subject)**

1 message

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**Betty Cotter** <memeanbhb5@gmail.com>

Mon, May 11, 2020 at 8:28 PM

To: lrاند@whittier.tec.ma.us

As the grand parents of 2 grads of 2020 We feel our grads deserve a proper graduation. A virtual graduation is just not cutting it. I think we can all remember that proud day when we graduated from high school. I think a later date would be fine, but to blow it off with a virtual thing is a kick in the face after 12 years of hard work. I truly hope you all will see this. We understand the positions you are in. But there is always a way to make work. The graduation experience is once in a life time thing. Let's not disappoint our children. I am sure if needed Many parents and grandparents would lend a helping hand.



Lisa Rand <[lrاند@whittier.tec.ma.us](mailto:lrاند@whittier.tec.ma.us)>

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## Fwd: Our four years

1 message

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**Emily O'Flaherty** <[eao0105@icloud.com](mailto:eao0105@icloud.com)>  
To: [Lrand@whittier.tec.ma.us](mailto:lrاند@whittier.tec.ma.us)

Mon, May 11, 2020 at 4:59 PM

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Emily O'Flaherty <[eao0105@icloud.com](mailto:eao0105@icloud.com)>  
**Date:** May 11, 2020 at 1:49:28 PM EDT  
**To:** [lrاند@whittier.tec.ma.us](mailto:lrاند@whittier.tec.ma.us)  
**Subject:** Our four years

Good afternoon, I am writing this on behalf of my fellow classmates and myself. As we are all trying our best to have hope for the future during these trying times many of us have lost our hope for our senior year. Due to no ones fault, but the way of the world. Many times we've been told things and don't know what to believe. I can only speak for myself and the fellow classmates that i've talked to. This is something we've been waiting for since we were little, we are raised to do good in school to make it to the finish line and graduate. We are witnessing so many other schools finding ways around this hard time and I don't think it would be fair to throw in the towel so soon for the class of 2020. We all know that what's going on isn't ideal, but most of us feel that we are getting pushed to the side because it would take extra work to make our graduation and prom work. We don't care if we have to wait to the end of July or August to get what we've been waiting for. We are whittier wildcats and we're fighting for what we want and believe is right. That's what we were taught at Whittier and we stand by that. Once a wildcat always a wildcat. So please don't throw in the towel and let us have our glory moments to shine.  
Thank you.



Lisa Rand <lrاند@whittier.tec.ma.us>

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## May 13 Whittier school committee meeting and graduation 2020

1 message

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**AmyLynne Cotter-Joseph** <twinboysmomma820@gmail.com>

Fri, May 8, 2020 at 11:12 AM

To: lrاند@whittier.tec.ma.us

Cc: wood45106@aol.com, earlydickjr@aol.com

I am the proud parent of two seniors from there. My twins are graduating this year. Every single parent and child I know who is involved with the senior class at Whittier is dismayed with the current plan for graduation.

Per the information that I am aware of no suggestions have been or will be entertained by Maureen Lynch superintendent. They held a zoom conference with the student council and a bunch of ideas were presented about ways to socially distance but somewhat traditionally graduate the kids even if it was smaller groups or individually. I'm sure you are aware Haverhill has devised a plan to graduate the kids individually and I don't understand why Whittier can't come up with something equally as good. Haverhill has at least 100 more students in their senior class than Whittier. Whittier has the ability to break them down into shops etc. It definitely seems to me terrible that one woman has gotten to call all the shots. From a student who was in on the zoom conference it was said that no matter what ideas were thrown out, Mrs. Lynch shot them down and proclaimed we are having virtual graduation. I have tried to communicate with Mrs. Lynch on various emails only for her to tell me what she wanted to tell me, ignore my responses, and now take offense to my last email so she emailed me back saying she won't communicate with me further on this. I think the school committee has to be able to step in and help right the situation. There are brave young men and women from that senior class going off to the military, including my son. Holding a traditional graduation in 2021 that young men and women who are off serving our country will not be able to attend is not the answer in my mind. I can connect you with other parents who feel the same way and students alike. I have seen many Whittier parents post the article about Haverhill's plan to graduate their seniors with hope that we may change Whittier's mind, but I have to tell you after the tyrannical responses I've gotten from Mrs. Lynch I know that if she's the only avenue I'm discussing this with there is no hope. Please override Mrs Lynch and give these kids an in person variation of graduation that they deserve.

Kindly,  
AmyLynne Cotter



Lisa Rand <lrاند@whittier.tec.ma.us>

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## Additional info for WHITTIER school committee meeting Wednesday may 13

1 message

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AmyLynne Cotter-Joseph <twinboysmomma820@gmail.com>  
To: Lisa Rand <lrاند@whittier.tec.ma.us>

Mon, May 11, 2020 at 8:31 AM

A petition was done requesting something other than virtual graduation whether it be postponing the graduation till late summer early fall or a smaller group / individual approach like Haverhill is doing. I have included a link to the petition which has 590 signatures

<http://chnng.it/f9hqG2ny>

Per The consensus I am getting I believe most people would prefer to see it postponed until late summer or early fall with a back-up plan of graduating the kids in small groups such as by shop or individually like Haverhill is doing, should the more traditional postponed option not be a reality in time. it should be noted all of these suggestions have been made to multiple people including Mrs. Lynch. All suggestions have been dismissed without any conversation otherwise.

I know Whittier has the space to make this happen the stadium and field are gigantic there are certainly ways that social distancing could be employed with the students and the families attending. Family could be limited to four people each and a section blocked off and marked with a sign for each kid's family And families could be 6 feet away or even more from the other families. Students could be spaced 6 feet from each other. Eliminate all of the fluffy speeches from administration and outside sources. Have the valedictorian and salutatorian speeches pre-recorded and play them on a screen. call students up for their moment of Glory to get their diploma have the diploma on a table 6 feet away from any administration who would be calling their names have them grab the diploma stand for their moment of pictures and walk off the stage. If you want to put even more precaution into it you could have it said prior to graduation starting that once your name is called and you have your diploma that student should exit the field and the family should exit the stadium. Would all of this take some work? yes definitely!

However these kids, after losing the rest of their senior year and having to stress over will they have a graduation or prom? Will they get to start college timely? Etc. They deserve the effort that needs to go into it to make it happen.

Kindly,  
AmyLynne Cotter