

WEST BOYLSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES
Wednesday, December 13, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.
Middle/High School Media Center – Library

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

James Pedone, Jr. Chairman
Jason Ponticelli, Vice Chairman
Jennifer Breen
Nancy Hubbard
Emily Lehman-Miller

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT

Richard Meagher, Superintendent of Schools
Christopher Fournier, Principal Middle/High School
Alex Audette, Principal Elementary School
Cristy Morrison, Business Administrator

ADMINISTRATOR NOT PRESENT

Sherry Traina, Director of Special Education

ALSO PRESENT

Faculty and audience.

Mr. Pedone called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Ponticelli moved, seconded by Ms. Breen to accept the regular minutes of November 8, 2023.

VOTE 5-0-0

2. Student Recognition Awards: Elementary School, Middle School, High School

Students from the Elementary School, Middle School and High School were recognized as Student of the month: Elizabeth Manchester, Antony Kamau, and Andressa Sarli.

3. Student Advisory Council Representatives

Student Advisory Council Members Anabelle Anand and Brielle Tego reported on:

- A Cappella Club – Tree lighting performance was canceled due to weather. Caroling in the Community Dec. 6th, 13th, and 20th.
- GSA – Raising awareness through their events on their GSA board.
- Environmental Club (Re-Branded Garden Club) – Will meet after the 1st of the year. Planning stages of a school garden.
- Game Club – Now has a 3d printer. Club is thinking about adding an additional day for board games rather than primarily focusing on D&D.
- HS Student Council – Main focuses at this time are Giving Tree, Cultural Wall, and Play Competitions.
- MS Student Council – Planned and promoted a successful middle school spirit week in October. Looking forward to writing holiday cards to be delivered with meals through Meals on Wheels Program and planning a middle school door decorating contest in January.
- DECA – Will be taking the individualized certification exam on Jan. 10th and Jan. 11th.

- National Art Honor Society – Currently working on Calendar fundraiser.
- National Honor Society – Members continue to cover important service opportunities at the town food pantry/senior center/ upcoming- shoveling for seniors in town and the ALLY club. NHS ran a personal care items drive for the food pantry. NHS also is running a Secret Giver activity for staff in December. Lastly, from December 1st to December 22nd NHS is running the 2nd annual elf on the shelf activity for students.
- National French Honor Society – The French Honor Society will be participating in the French American Friendship Contest 2024. Locally, they plan to assist the efforts of Be Like Brit, with operational functions in Worcester.
- National Spanish Honor Society- New members are going to be initiated by mid-January and all will be able to assist with upcoming events and activities.
- HS Yearbook – Working on getting senior pages formatted and gathering pictures of activities throughout the school.
- Interact Club – Senior Center Christmas Breakfast on Dec. 8th and Breakfast with Santa on Dec. 9th for kids. “Interact Gives Back Week” will be Dec. 18th – Dec. 22nd. This will be a mix of fun prior to break with the ways we give back to the school and local communities.
- Open Studio – Pottery offered every Thursdays for all students.
- Seminars – Fall Seminars focused on building healthy relationships. In January there will be two new seminars that will run. The first will be a ten week program focusing on “Coping Skills”. Once completed it will be followed by a 12 week program focusing on “Self Esteem”.
- Tri-M Music Honor Society – Members have taken on leadership opportunities and created multiple service projects for the senior center and community performances. There is also an upcoming trip to NYC to see Water for Elephants.
- Volleyball Club – At this time the club is awaiting open weight room time for training.
- Freshman Class – The freshman class had a great fall organizing spirit week, gathering donations around Thanksgiving and generating ideas for fundraisers. The freshman clothing sale, which started in November is wrapping up, and they are planning a movie night for February followed by a dodgeball tournament around March.
- Junior Class – The junior class is preparing for prom. They are also creating fundraising opportunities for the class of 2025. Students will be in charge of selling concessions for the varsity basketball games this season.
- Senior Class – Hosting the Winter Wonderland event in the Middle/High School Café on Sunday, December 17th.

4. Acknowledgement of Recording Secretary

5. Highlight on Schools: Middle/High School: 2023 MCAS Overview – Chris Fournier

Mr. Fournier presented the Middle/High School 2023 MCAS overview to the School Committee.

Ms. Breen commented to the presentation:

Ms. Breen commented to Mr. Fournier that the middle school “knocks it out of the park in MCAS and when it comes to the high school they are not even in the field”. Ms. Breen shared the new full year high school schedule should make a change in MCAS and possibly AP and PSAT’s scores in the future however, she feels the results may take time to show. Ms. Breen is also hopeful that having the two new teachers will also make a movement in numbers. Ms. Breen shared with the committee that she does not want to be a district that relies solely on numbers however, she is aware of community concerns with high school achievements. Ms. Breen would be interested in following some of the high performing middle school students into high school to see if those same students remain at the same level.

Mr. Fournier followed up on comment to Ms. Breen:

Mr. Fournier replied to the comment regarding the new full day high school schedule, and agrees there should be improvements in test scores. Mr. Fournier also shared with the committee improvement in state assessments

is documented in the Middle High School Improvement Plan. He further pointed out his plan to improve grade 10 Math MCAS scores and the steps being taken towards that goal.

Ms. Lehman-Miller commented to the presentation:

Ms. Lehman-Miller commented that upon looking at the data points presented by Mr. Fournier, it appears to not look positive. Ms. Lehman-Miller requested some sort of tracking for the district to show growth and evidence.

6. Community Input

Jacqueline Leonardo – 7 Nuha Circle, West Boylston – Ms. Leonardo asked the School Committee out of the middle school students that are out performing on the MCAS are those students staying in the district? Also how many 9th graders did West Boylston take as school choice and are the school choice students factored into the MCAS data?

Mr. Meagher requested that Ms. Leonardo send her inquiries in email format as that data would not be available at this meeting.

7. Warrants

Ms. Breen moved, seconded by Ms. Hubbard to accept the payables warrants dated November 20, 2023 and December 11, 2023.

VOTE 5-0-0

Mr. Ponticelli moved, seconded by Ms. Lehman-Miller to accept the payroll warrants dated November 10, 2023, November 24, 2023 and December 8, 2023.

VOTE 5-0-0

8. Subcommittee Reports

- Budget and Capital Planning Subcommittee – Mr. Ponticelli shared with the committee that the Budget and Capital Planning Subcommittee met and discussed future challenges regarding the budget. He also shared that members from FINCOM and CIP attended the meeting to review long term Capital Planning. Additionally, a change in the West Boylston Public Schools substitute pay was proposed to be increased from the current \$80 a day for non-certified individuals to \$100 per day. Along with a proposed increase from the current \$85 a day for certified individuals to \$110 per day. A formal vote will be on January's agenda.
- School Safety Committee- Mr. Meagher shared with the committee that the School Safety Committee met with the Fire Department and Police Department to review current language and also contact information within the public safety departments due to staffing changes and retirements. Mr. Meagher also shared with the committee that there will be a professional development day in January for staff and facility that has been booked with the "I Love You Guys Foundation". This foundation provides programs for crisis response and post-crisis unification.

9. Communications and Reports

- a. Major Edwards Elementary School Principal Mr. Audette reported on:
 - 2nd Annual International Festival of Gratitude, November 16th
 - Soles 4 Soles – 5th grade event November 27th to December 15th
 - Grand Opening of the Playground, December 6th
 - Professional Development Day, December 6th
 - ELLevation Training, STAR Training

- PTA Movie Night, December 15th @ 6pm – 8pm
 - Holiday Week, December 18th to December 22nd
 - Holiday Concerts, December 19th in Grades K-3 (Families A – L @9:30am /M – Z @ 1:30pm)
 - Holiday Concert, December 19th @ 6pm for Grades 4 and 5 (Snow Date: Dec. 21st @ 6pm)
 - Holiday Vacation begins, December 25th (Students return January 2, 2024)
- b. Middle High School Principal Mr. Fournier reported on:
- Turkey Gaggle food drive
 - Giving Tree toy drive sponsored by WBHS Student Council
 - WB Lions Football Team State Championship Win
 - Football Celebration Parade, Saturday, December 16th
 - West Boylston Middle/High School 2023-2024 School Improvement Plan
- c. Director of Special Education Ms. Traina: Not present at December meeting.
- d. Business Administrator Ms. Morrison reported on:
- Expense Report
- e. Superintendent of Schools Mr. Meagher reported on:
- 2023 Council of Administrators of Compensatory Education (CACE) Conference, Nov.30-Dec.1st
 - School Facilities Updates
 - Major Edwards – The T-Wing with undergo repairs during the holiday break
 - Middle/High School – reinstalling the reupholstered auditorium seats, after repainting the floor during holiday break. Room 202 will have the floor replaced due to moisture damage.
 - District English Learner Enrollment
 - Vocational Enrollment Updates
 - Senator Robyn Kennedy visiting the District on December 15th
 - Massachusetts School Building Authority
 - New Statement of Interest request required from West Boylston Public Schools
- f. School Committee reported on:

Ms. Hubbard made a motion to approve the first reading of policy BEDH-E, Public Comment At School Committee Meetings, seconded by Ms. Lehman-Miller.

VOTE 3-2-0

Ms. Hubbard made a motion to approve the first reading of policy JJF, Student Activity Accounts, seconded by Ms. Breen.

VOTE 5-0-0

Mr. Ponticelli made a motion to approve the streaming/hybrid of future School Committee meetings starting at the January 10, 2024 School Committee meeting, seconded by Ms. Lehman-Miller.

VOTE 5-0-0

10. Executive Session: To Conduct Strategic Session in Preparation for Negotiations with Nonunion Personnel.

Mr. Pedone made a motion to go into Executive Session to conduct non-union personnel discussions, and the School Committee will not return to open session and will adjourn the meeting from Executive Session, Ms. Breen seconded at 8:35pm.

A roll call vote was taken.

Ms. Breen - Yes

Mr. Ponticelli - Yes

Ms. Hubbard - Yes

Ms. Lehman-Miller - Yes

Mr. Pedone- Yes

Respectfully submitted,

Anita Pratt, Recording Secretary