



WHITTIER REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

A regular meeting of the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School Committee was held hybrid (remote/in-person) on **Wednesday, January 12, 2022** via ZOOM Teleconferencing at 115 Amesbury Line Rd., Haverhill, MA per Governor Baker's Act extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the State of Emergency, specifically suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A sec. 20.

Members Present: Charlie LaBella Chip O'Connor Paul Tucker
Brett Murphy Joseph Haberland Ron Fitzgerald

Members Remote: Lisa O'Connor, Johanna True, Dave Irving, Richard Early,
Garry James, Jo-Ann Testaverde

Members Absent: Tony LeSage, Scott Wood

Others Present: Maureen Lynch, Superintendent
Kara Kosmes, Business Manager
Chris Laganas, Principal

Mr. Murphy stated that the meeting was being recorded and held hybrid (remote/in-person) via ZOOM Teleconferencing. Per Governor Baker's Act extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the State of Emergency. This Act includes an extension, until April 1, 2022, of the remote meeting provisions of his March 12, 2020, Executive Order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law. Per Governor Baker's extension, 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. All members listed as present were in attendance at Whittier Tech High School. Lisa O'Connor, Johanna True, Dave Irving, Richard Early, Garry James and Jo-Ann Testaverde were present remotely via ZOOM Teleconferencing. Mr. Murphy began the meeting with the pledge of allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Murphy asked if there was any public comment. There was no public comment.

By motion of Mr. Tucker, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve the Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting for December 8, 2021 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. Tucker, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve the Treasurer's Report for December 2021 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business posted.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

There was no student representative report.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Personnel Action

The Superintendent, Maureen Lynch reported on the hiring of two (2) vocational teaching assistants, a special education facilitator/evaluation team leader, a cosmetology instructor, an administrative assistant to guidance & admissions office, a maintenance mechanic, a desktop & network support manager, individuals to work in the December Vacation Boot Camp and individuals to work in the evening school program. She also reported on the resignations of a computer network systems technician, a guidance secretary and a cosmetology instructor.

Budget Update

Ms. Lynch reported that the Executive Subcommittee met earlier in the evening to discuss the FY23 budget. At that meeting, they began with a 6.74% increase which will be reduced for the next Executive Subcommittee meeting. Ms. Lynch reported that they are still waiting for the numbers from the State.

MCAS Update

Ms. Lynch reported that there was no MCAS update this month.

Superintendent's Update

Ms. Lynch provided an update. She reported that on Friday, December 10, 2021, she had an interview with WHAV radio. She was able to give a brief update on Whittier Tech. On Monday, December 13, 2021, she attended the remote Merrimack Valley Chamber Board Meeting. On Wednesday, December 15, 2021, she met with Marjorie Ringrose from the Smith Foundation. They discussed Whittier's plan to work with senior high school students from the sending school districts. On Tuesday, December 21, 2021, she attended the DESE COVID webinar. DESE continues to update guidance on close contacts, quarantine, and other COVID protocols. On Monday, January 10, 2022, she attended an MSBA meeting. At that meeting, Whittier received final approval to move forward with LeftField as OPM. Ms. Lynch provided an update on COVID numbers since the December school committee meeting. She reported that there are 223 students and 26 staff members as of January 11th. Ms. Lynch reported that, like Haverhill Public Schools, Friday, January 14th will be a ½ day for school at Whittier. Students will be in school until 10:43 a.m. and then staff will leave at 11:00 a.m. This will give the cleaners an opportunity to do a deep cleaning of the building. Ms. Lynch commended the staff and students for taking all of this in stride. Ms. Lynch stated that there has been many discussions about learning loss last year. She is growing increasingly concerned about the learning loss of students this year. There have been so many students out of school due to COVID that there are certainly gaps in their learning. Ms. Jensen and Dr. Fay will discuss some of the things Whittier is doing this year to help students.

Ms. Katrina Jensen and Dr. Kelly Fay provided a learning loss update through a PowerPoint presentation. They provided the pre-assessment results in ELA and math for the freshmen class that were done in May 2021. The main concerns identified were: executive functioning, social skills, low academic skills and behavior concerns. A teacher survey done in December 2021 showed 64 students are struggling in one class; 15 students are struggling in two classes; 9 students are struggling in three classes; one student is struggling in 4 classes and 19 of the students struggling academically were also listed as having social/behavioral concerns. They discussed the strategies that will be implemented to address these results. The strategies included 1) all grade 9 English classes will include Power Up (Lexia) as part of their curriculum; 2) Power UP will be integrated into the grade 9 exploratory program for 30 minutes on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays; 3) Grade 9 English instructors will check the log times for students in their "academy week" and let Dr. Fay know if there are any students not working as they should be; 4) Grade 9 English instructors will include Power Up as an

employability grade in their class; and 5) The new adjustment counselor will work with the 19 students who are struggling academically, behaviorally, and socially. There was a brief question and answer session that followed their presentation.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Mr. Chris Laganas, the Principal, provided an update. Mr. Laganas thanked the athletes and coaches for following the necessary protocols to keep students and coaches safe as the winter sports continue to move forward. Midterms will begin Tuesday, January 18th and end on Thursday, January 21st. During midterm week, the Vocational Coordinators will be hosting the "Freshmen Half-Time Show". All freshmen students will be exposed to engaging presentations and activities throughout the week. On Tuesday, they will be doing physical education; on Wednesday, team building activities and guidance presentations; and on Thursday, they will hear from SkillsUSA, Above the Influence and Aaron Polansky, Superintendent of Old Colony and motivational speaker. Mr. Laganas reported that before the Holiday Break, staff enjoyed some fun activities together. The 2nd annual Chili-off was held with ten staff members entering. There was also a Holiday Potluck extravaganza for all staff to enjoy. There are more fun activities being planned. The Holiday Fund raised over \$17,000 this past year. Between Thanksgiving and the winter holidays, 150 students and families were helped. Mr. Laganas thanked everyone who donated to the fund to date. Mr. Laganas reported that Term 2 ends on Friday, January 14th and report cards will be issued on January 28th.

BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Kara Kosmes, the Business Manager, provided the Variance Analysis from July through December as required by the Annual Agenda. Last month a transfer was approved by the School Committee that aligned several accounts that had negative balances. The District is on track at mid-year. However, some accounts are overdue because of the increased cost of supplies and COVID related expenditures. Some of the COVID related expenditures will be moved to grants where funding permits. Mr. LaBella commended Ms. Kosmes on her report.

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

Mr. Murphy went over the annual agenda items for February. Mr. Murphy reported that the 2022 Standard Mileage Rate from the IRS is 58.5 cents. Mr. Murphy asked the Committee to vote on acceptance of the rate.

By motion of Mr. LaBella, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to accept the 2022 Standard Mileage Rate from the IRS of 58.5 cents. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Executive Subcommittee met January 12, 2022. They will meet on February 9, 2022 at 5:30 PM

The Instructional Subcommittee has not met.

The Plant Operations Subcommittee has not met.

The Salary & Negotiations Subcommittee met December 15, 2021 and January 5, 2022 for negotiations with WREA - Teachers Unit. They will meet again on January 19, 2022 at 3 pm.

The Policy Subcommittee has not met. Mr. Irving stated that at the November 2021 school committee meeting the Admissions Policy was voted on and approved. The DESE has requested that the approved Admissions Policy be amended to add a paragraph under *C. School Discipline/Conduct...* that reads *"If a student has not been suspended for any infractions under M.G.L. c71, § 37H or M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ½ or been suspended or expelled for more than 10 days under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ¾ then they will receive the maximum number of 10 points available in this category. If a student has been suspended for any infractions under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H or M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ½ or been suspended or expelled for more than 10 days under M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H ¾ they will receive 0 or 5 points in this category."*

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Dr. Testaverde to suspend the Rules and vote on this addendum to the Admission Policy as recommended by DESE tonight to fast track it. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. James to incorporate the addendum to the Admission Policy as recommended by the DESE and presented by the Superintendent. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

MEETING DATES

The Executive Subcommittee meeting is February 9, 2022 at 5:30 pm. The Regular School Committee meeting is February 9, 2022 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 Dr. Testaverde to adjourn at 7:20 P.M.
Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Rand
Recording Secretary