



## WHITTIER REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

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A regular meeting of the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School Committee was held hybrid (remote/in-person) on **Wednesday, December 14, 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:    Scott Wood            Greg Noyes            JoAnn Testaverde  
                             Brett Murphy        Ron Fitzgerald        Dave Irving  
                             Paul Tucker        Sandi Coppinger  
                             Johanna True        Chip O'Connor

Members Remote:    Lisa O'Connor, Richard Early, Garry James

Members Absent:    Joseph Haberland

Others Present:    Maureen Lynch, Superintendent  
                             Kara Kosmes, Business Manager

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 March 31, 2023, of the remote meeting provisions. 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 6:31 P.M. Mr. Murphy took attendance. All members listed as present were in attendance at Whittier Tech High School. Lisa O'Connor, Richard Early and Garry James 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. The Committee went to carpentry to see the holiday float.

By motion of Mr. Tucker, seconded by Mr. Irving to approve the Minutes of the Regular School Committee meeting for November 9, 2022 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. Tucker, seconded by Mr. James to approve the Executive Session minutes for November 9, 2022 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Ms. True to approve the Treasurer's Report for November 2022 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

## OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business posted.

## STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Taylor Leblanc provided an update on sports and activities of the different clubs. The boys varsity basketball had over 50 students tryout for the varsity team including 6 returning players from last year's team. The team opened up on Friday night against the defending league champs and came up short. The girls varsity basketball has 14 players. They played their first game on Friday against Shawsheen, winning 34-32. They also have an away game against Essex Tech on Friday, December 16th. The wrestling team has had a solid first couple weeks of practice, with over 45 participants. They opened up on Friday at Gloucester and will be hosting their first home match on Wednesday, December 14th against St. John's Prep. The hockey team lost 4-1 to Lynnfield on December 11th at Salem Ice Center. Their next game is against Methuen on Thursday, December 15th. The cheerleading team has 18 members that are getting ready to cheer at the boys basketball games. Skills USA had 12 students and 3 advisors who attended the Fall State Leadership conference in November. They spent time in workshops and training at the conference. There is a District Conference on March 16th with 220 spots for students to fill. Culinary Arts will be bringing two teams of three students to the MRE challenge on Jan 26th. They are also preparing to take a

group of 14 seniors to the SkillsUSA SAIL conference at Gillette Stadium on Feb 9th. This is the first time that Whittier will be participating in the seniors only conference focused on Leadership training and exploration of post high school opportunities. The MultiCultural Club enjoyed presentations by students about their heritage country of El Salvador and by teachers about the Constitution. In addition, they are running the Coats for Kids Coat Drive during December in collaboration with SkillsUSA. Key Club spent its last two meetings filling out Holiday Cards for the Meals on Wheels Programs in Salisbury and Amesbury. In addition, a few members volunteered at the Salisbury Sea Festival of Trees on Saturday, December 3rd. Peer Leadership has been planning a candy-cane-grams event for the school which will be held in the month of December. The Interact Club served community meals with the Rotary Club and helped with gift wrapping for the Ozzie's kids Christmas party. The Chess Club has over 40 active members and new people signing up every week. The tournament is going into its 6th round with two top contenders playing their 6th match. Student Government has been working hard on designing merchandise, with the help of marketing and DVC students. United Nations participated in their first conference of the season in November. It was a Crisis Conference held at the University of Massachusetts/Lowell.

The Robotics Club has been working on shield bots and learning how to fly drones. The club allows students to learn coding and programming at their own pace. The Environmental Club is continuing their work on tree species signs. They have been able to work with CAD in designing and producing a method for making the signs that will be easy to read and withstand weathering. The Ski Club has their first trip to Pat's Peak on January 6th for night skiing. The Drama Club is auditioning students for the spring musical, *Mamma Mia*. Callbacks are Thursday, December 14th. The cast list should be announced before the holiday break. CAD students are designing the set and then the plans will be sent to the carpentry shop to begin building. The Art Club has been familiarizing themselves with the pottery wheel and other sculpting methods. GSA hosted the Northeaster GSA Leadership Council meeting. There were over 70 students and advisors from Shawsheen Tech, Greater Lowell, Greater Lawrence, and Nashoba. DECA has been preparing the two competitors that are going to Danvers for the district competition this week. The Yearbook Club is halfway done with the page layout. They have 87% of the senior portraits in and the cover will go out in December. The Poetry Club has held weekly meetings where they discuss and write different works. They plan to celebrate J.G. Whittier's birthday with cake and poetry next week.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

### Personnel Action

The Superintendent, Maureen Lynch reported on the hiring of an administrative assistant to the Coordinators of Curriculum & Data Assessment, a moderate disabilities instructor, an accounts payable clerk, a route bus driver, an above the influence program manger, above the influence advisors, community outreach translators, an ELL program facilitator and winter coaches. She also reported on the resignations of a route bus driver, a moderate disabilities instructor and an electrical instructor.

### Budget Update

Ms. Lynch reported that they are meeting with department heads and the administration to finalize department submissions to build the FY24 budget.

### MCAS Update

Ms. Lynch reported that all appeals have been granted. All seniors in the Class of 2023 have passed the MCAS. Whittier administered the November MCAS retest for ELA to three juniors and the math MCAS retest to eight juniors.

### School Building Update

Ms. Lynch reported that the school building committee met December 13th. The committee voted to have Robert Hardy, Brett Murphy, and Dick Early for the Construction Management at Risk company interview committee. The interviews will be happening some time in late January/early February. Ms. Lynch and Ms. Kosmes continue to meet with the architects and project managers weekly.

### Superintendent's Update

Ms. Lynch provided an update. On November 15, 2022, she attended the Merrimack Valley Chamber Executive Board meeting at the Merrimack Valley Credit Union in Lawrence. On Friday, November 18, 2022, Whittier hosted a meeting with Town Manager's from the Whittier District. On November 30th - December 2nd, she attended the ACTE Career Tech Vision Conference in Las Vegas with Jane and Paul Moskevitz. This conference is well attended by many of the vocational schools in the state. It was the first time she attended the conference. In the future, she would prefer to attend a conference with more "takeaways". On Thursday, December 8, 2022, she attended the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund Advisory Board remote meeting. On Friday, December 9, 2022, she hosted an area vocational superintendent meeting. This was a great opportunity to share best practices with one another. On Monday, December 12,

2022, she attended a meeting at Tri-County Vocational School to discuss best practices with vocational colleagues about MSBA projects. On Tuesday, December 13, 2022, she met with Governor Baker at Essex Tech. She reported that Whittier received a \$499,000 grant from the Capital Skills Cabinet. She stated that \$235,000 will be for Whittier to begin to learn about the maintenance and repair of electric vehicles and \$264,000 will be for Whittier's health assisting program. Ms. Lynch thanked Brett Murphy for attending the event. On Wednesday, December 14, 2022, she attended the Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors meeting. This was a great opportunity to share workforce needs in the Merrimack Valley. Ms. Lynch reported that Whittier was nominated and named a Distinguished School by the National ESEA Distinguished Schools Program that publicly recognizes qualifying federally funded schools for positive educational advances and the outstanding academic achievement of their students. The program was established in 1996 and showcases hundreds of schools identified by the State Education Agency for their success in one of three categories: Category 1 - Exceptional student performance and academic growth as determined by each state; Category 2 - Closing the achievement gap between student groups, as determined by each state; and Category 3 - Excellence in serving special populations of students (examples are homeless, migrant, English language learners, etc.) (high needs).

#### PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Mr. Chris Laganas, the Principal, was not at the meeting but Ms. Lynch provided a principal update. She reported that the boosters fall banquet was held on Tuesday, December 6th. There were over 300+ parents and student/athletes in attendance. The winter sports season began on November 28th. The tours for all 8th grade students continue and should be completed by the holiday break. It has been a wonderful opportunity for potential students to see Whittier and what Whittier has to offer. Nettle and Ipswich are scheduled to tour this week. On Thursday, December 8th, the Athletic Director, Kevin Bradley and Mr. Laganas attended an event at the TD Garden in Boston. The conference addressed hate in school sports. The Attorney General, Governor-Elect Maura Healy and representatives from all the major sports teams spoke about how they must assist school communities to keep bias and hate out of sports. The keynote speaker was former NBA All-Star and Boston Celtics Dana Barros. The holiday fund is running again to help alleviate burdens of Whittier students and families. Ms. Lynch thanked all who have donated to the Fund and Foundation to date. She thanked Cheryl Begin for continuing to coordinate the process for Whittier students and families throughout the holiday season. Progress reports for Term 2 will be issued Friday, December 16th. The school play will be held on Friday, March 17th through Sunday, March 19th. Instructors, Elaine Bucher and Sarah Anderson will be directing the musical, *Mamma Mia*.

## BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Kara Kosmes, the Business Manager reported that there have been generously donated items to benefit Whittier's educational, vocational and extracurricular activities outlined in a memorandum from her dated December 1, 2022. She asked the Committee for acceptance of the donations listed in her memorandum.

By motion of Mr. Wood, seconded by Mr. Noyes to accept the donations listed in the memorandum from the Business Manager dated December 1, 2022.  
Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Ms. Kosmes reported that the District leases 17 school buses and owns 10. The five year lease for the 17 school buses expires on June 30, 2023. The annual cost of the lease is \$131,764. The renewal quotes for a new lease to replace the 17 school buses is averaging approximately \$400,000 and lead time for delivery is anywhere from six months to more than a year. There are grants available to Districts who replace diesel buses with electric buses, however, after doing research the buses still remain expensive even with grant assistance. Additionally, the current run and recharging times of the electric buses are not yet at levels that will work for Whittier given the geographic area. Thorough inspection of the 17 buses by the bus mechanics revealed that they have low mileage, are still in excellent condition, and are expected to have a remaining useful life of at least three more years. The best option at this time is for Whittier to buy out the lease when it expires on June 30th. Ms. Kosmes recommended that the school committee approve the following financing terms: the purchase price is \$714,000; put a down payment of \$274,000 to be paid from the remaining balance in the transportation revolving fund; the amount financed \$440,000 for 3 years at a rate of 7.6%; and the annual payment would be \$171,112.41 to be paid form the district budget and/or the transportation revolving fund. Mr. Early would like to look at this in six months.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Dr. Testaverde to approve the finance terms for the 17 school buses as presented by the Business Manager. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

## COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

Mr. Murphy went over the annual agenda items for January.

## SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

The Executive Subcommittee has not met. They will meet January 11, 2023 at 5:30 pm.  
The Instructional Subcommittee has not met.  
The Plant Operations Subcommittee has not met.  
The Salary & Negotiations Subcommittee has not met.  
The Policy Subcommittee met on November 9, 2022 and December 14, 2022.

By motion of Mr. Tucker, seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald to approve the minutes of November 9, 2022 as presented. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Mr. Irving reported that the Policy Subcommittee reviewed the following policies prior to the regular meeting: DBJ-1 Regional School District Budget Transfer Authority; DD-Grant Proposals and Applications; DJE - Procurement Requirements; and KDC - Public Gifts to the School.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Wood to suspend the rules and move the above policies for a first and final reading as we move into budget season. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Dr. Testaverde to accept DBJ-1 Regional School District Budget Transfer Authority with change; DD- Grant Proposals and Applications; DJE - Procurement Requirements; and KDC Public Gifts to the School for a first and final reading. Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Mr. Irving stated there were policies from Section D Fiscal Management included in the school committee packet for a first reading: DA - Fiscal Management Goals; DB-1- Regional School District Annual Budget; DB-1-R - Budget Apportionment of Expenses for Regional Schools; DBC - Budget Deadlines and Schedules; DBD - Budget Planning; DBG-1 - Budget Adoption Procedures for Regional Schools; DEC - Federal Funds Supplement not Supplant Policy; DGA - 1- Regional School District Authorized Signatures; DH-1 Regional School District Bonded Employees and Officers; DI - Fiscal Accounting and Reporting; DIE-1 - Regional School District Audits; DJ- Purchasing; DJA - Purchasing Authority; DK-1 -Regional School District Payment Procedures; DKC - Expense Reimbursements.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Tucker to approve the above policies from Section D Fiscal Management for a first reading as presented.  
Unanimously approved by roll call vote

#### MEETING DATES

The Executive Subcommittee meeting is January 11, 2023 at 5:30 pm.  
The Regular School Committee meeting is January 11, 2023 at 6:30 pm.

#### NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business posted. Ms. Lynch stated that she has asked the Learning Loss Coordinators to provide an update to the Committee at the January meeting.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session posted.

By motion of Mr. Irving, seconded by Mr. Wood to adjourn at 7:27 P.M.  
Unanimously approved by roll call vote

Respectfully submitted,  
*Lisa Rand*  
Recording Secretary