

**Westport School Committee
Work Session
DATE: Thursday, July 8, 2021
Time 9:00 a.m.
PLACE: Virtual Meeting**

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MINUTES

Members Present: Michelle Orlando, Melissa Pacheco, Nancy Stanton Cross, Nancy Tavares, Antonio Viveiros

Also Present: Thomas Aubin Interim Superintendent, Darren Elwell Director of Curriculum, Lori Melo Administrative Assistant, Michelle Rapoza School Business Manager, Elaine Santos Special Education Director, 0 Community Participants

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance - Chair Tavares opened the Virtual School Committee Work Session at 9:06 am. with a quorum of the members present, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Tavares announced:

This meeting is being held remotely in accordance with the Governor of Massachusetts' March 12, 2020 order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c.30A, Section 20 and on June 16, 2021 Governor Baker signed an Act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency.

II. Discussion of ARP / ESSER - Use of Funds -

Superintendent Aubin reported there will be two community workshops. One workshop will have parents and students, the other one will consist of community members. Tentative meeting dates are July 19th or 20th.

Ms. Rapoza would like to focus on ESSER II funds. There was a question on whether laptops could be purchased using a 3-year plan. Mr. Tomah mentioned this is not possible. A purchase order for an amount cannot be issued then only receive part of the order with the rest received the following year. The purchase amount must be spent in the year it is submitted and cannot be spread over 3 years. There are options to lease equipment. ERATE can be used to reimburse for hotspots.

Discussion took place on social emotional training with Ruler Training starting in December 2021. A proposed Social Emotional Learner Director was added to oversee where the district is with all social emotional learning. This would be a 2-year position and not a long-term position.

Ms. Stanton Cross questioned why \$50,000 will be used for laptops when the district is receiving \$150,000? Ms. Rapoza mentioned they just found out about these funds. Mr. Tomah is putting a proposal together to get MAC and WES up to par with connectivity issues. Ms. Stanton Cross requested to redline the \$50,000.

Discussion was held on the duties of the Social Emotional Learner Director. Mr. Aubin described some of the duties are to assist in overcoming trauma, formally address mental health issues, resilience, put together social emotional workshops and presentations, work with health, gym, and guidance, develop data to identify trends, tap into resources in the community and develop activities on this topic.

Ms. Santos added that this position would also work with de-escalation and zones of regulations to try and provide mitigation.

A request was made to receive further clarification on qualifications and job responsibilities of this position.

Certified after-school programs - Mr. Aubin explained they would like to provide programs that focus on getting certificates, for example career programs with OSHA certification. These programs are marketed for student's college and career pathways.

Tent rentals - Ms. Rapoza mentioned they are moving forward next year with just one tent at MAC. Presently it is used for Extended Day. This is pending guidelines for SY21/22.

Valtran storage containers - Ms. Rapoza reported the district has five storage containers. One at MAC, 2 at WES (one is owned by PTO), 2 at high school (one is owned by Music Boosters). May not use the entire \$2,000.

Verizon cell phone for nurses and hotspots - There are a total of 6 phones for nurses and 22 hot spots. ERATE funds may be used. Mr. Viveiros requested to receive a list of who uses phones. Ms. Rapoza has this information and will email the committee.

PPE supplies - Ms. Ouellette is doing an inventory putting prices and locations together for filters and cleaning chemicals.

III. Discussion of the Language Based Program - Ms. Santos explained the Language Based Program is available for grades 5-8. They will expand implementation to grades 4 and 9. This program is for students who struggle with reading and language skills and provides them with research-based strategies and skills. Student class numbers can reach 18 students. Training for grade 4 took place already and grade 9 will be later on during the summer. Special Education teachers will also be trained. Orton Gillingham training will also be this summer. Ann Larson will be doing a monthly consultation and developing language-based learning walks to assist administration in what to look for. Future program expansion to include 3rd grade and 10th grade is planned.

Ms. Santos mentioned the Language Based Program uses Landmark and covers 4 core classes. A teaching assistant is attached to the cohort and moves with the student.

A question on how students are identified for this program was asked. Ms. Santos explained that Ms. Larson along with teachers look at testing and a formal assessment at year-end will be completed. Dyslexia screening will identify students as well.

It was noted that inclusion is different from the Language Based Program.

Discussion took place on the importance of full certifications being in order and not just providing training. Ms. Santos mentioned part of the program's makeup is having tier 2 services. There are 13 participants now, some are Orton Gillingham and Wilson certified.

Discussion took place on using ESSER monies to provide certifications through stipends. Ms. Santos mentioned PD training is funded by a grant and Title II funds. OG training is expensive at about \$1,500 per participant. People having an interest could be signed on to stay in the district for at least 3 years. Ms. Santos would like to explore this further.

Ms. Santos will formalize information on the Language Based Program and get back to the committee. This will include a definition and written criteria for eligibility requirements. Mr. Elwell will provide some information he has on this topic.

IV. Discussion of I-Ready -
Data Team Stipends IReady
Diagnostic Software IReady

Mr. Elwell included the cost of \$50,000 for the I-Ready program as a placeholder. Costs for K-8 I-Ready would be \$12,000 and for K-12 \$16,800. He is recommending to go with K-12. This program does not require PD and the data becomes available immediately. In addition, with I-Ready dyslexia screening is available. For students in K-3, after reading assessment there is free access from dyslexia screener.

Mr. Elwell reported the district needs to develop a plan on how to use data and described the district as "data rich and information poor". Within the 4 schools next year he has about a half dozen participants in data teams that will work every month and receive a stipend per hour. Mr. Elwell's goal is to have 6 people in each school working on data teams. Although this may be an ambitious amount, he would like to build capacity with the number of people he has to begin this program with an eye on expansion. The program may need to begin with a more targeted approach, for example with a "lunch bunch" or students that are already targeted to need assistance.

Mr. Elwell explained with the Ruler Institute developing school-based teams (train the trainer) with 5 people per school is planned. Presently there are 7 applicants from the district with 20 spaces available. There are stipends for this program.

It was noted there is need for further discussion on the Ruler Institute.

Mr. Elwell mentioned the need to measure student performance and have this becoming part of the school culture. He met with the Leadership Team about various options, for example IXL. The consensus would like to implement the I-Ready software. Chair Tavares asked if enough staff will participate? Mr. Elwell feels if they make this an actionable item and carve out times to make meaning out of the data this program will have enough participation to run.

Mr. Elwell further explained the testing window will be open 3 times per year to assess progress or regression. Reading and Math are covered and in line with Massachusetts Standards with each subject's test taking 45 minutes. Data is available immediately on student's performance. Lesson plans can be printed to use with students. Students needs will be serviced according to the results. Professional Development will be offered as part of the 21/22 SY.

A question on who looks at these reports was asked. Mr. Elwell mentioned building leaders have access to reports and can see trends globally. Teachers have access but can view just their classes.

Total costs for I-Ready will be earmarked at \$20,000 not \$50,000.

DocuSign Forms Online - No further discussion on this item.

ASPEN Software - Ms. Rapoza reported a position of Registrar Data Administrator is needed to work with the ASPEN software. This position is already budgeted. Ms. Stanton Cross questioned the addition of the registrar position and the funding source. Mr. Aubin will look into this. The committee did agree to fund the ASPEN software.

Custodian 1.5 - No further discussion on this item.

Outdoor Furniture New Middle School High School - This is not part of the new school building project.

Zoom - No further discussion on this item.

Technology Infrastructure for MAC and WES - Mr. Tomah is putting together a plan.

Ms. Stanton Cross requested to have the Athletic Director roll out a fall sports schedule so parents will know what sports offerings will take place.

ESSER Funds spending list will be finalized.

Chair Tavares recapped these ideas on ways to improve:

- Have each department provide quarterly reports that list needs. This would help to plan financially.
- Adding a "Follow Up" section to the minutes for any items needing further exploration.

FOLLOW UP

The committee requests:

- Qualifications and job responsibilities for the Social Emotional Learner Director.
- Job description for the Registrar Data Administrator to include this ASPEN program.
- Funding source for the position of Registrar Data Administrator.
- List of who uses phones. Ms. Rapoza has this information and will email the committee.
- Ms. Santos will formalize information on the Language Based Program and get back to the committee. This will include a definition and written criteria for eligibility requirements.
- Athletic Director roll out a fall sports schedule so parents will know what sports offerings will take place.
- Finalize ESSER funds spending list.

(Ms. Stanton Cross left here at 10:38 am.)

V. Adjourn - A motion was made to adjourn. With members being present and voting individually and unanimously, the motion passes.

Motion by Viveiros, seconded by Tavares

4/0/0

Roll call vote:

Orlando Yes

Pacheco Yes

Tavares Yes

Viveiros Yes

The Virtual School Committee Work Session adjourned at 10:39 am.