

WEST BOYLSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
WEDNESDAY, September 12, 2012**

LOCATION: West Boylston Middle/High School Media Center

PRESENT:

<p><u>SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS</u> John Owanisian, Chairman Jennifer Breen, Vice-Chairman Richard Shaw Erin Palumbo James Pedone</p>	<p><u>ADMINISTRATORS</u> Elizabeth Schaper, Superintendent Lawrence Murphy, Principal Middle/High School Christopher LaBreck, Associate MS Principal Marjorie McCarthy, Principal Elementary School Cande Kristoff, Business Administrator Sherri Traina, Director of Special Education</p>
---	--

COMMUNITY

Faculty & Staff:	10	Guests:	25
Student Advisors:	3	Press:	1
Producers Club:	2		

Meeting Opened Mr. Owanisian opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the first School Committee Meeting of the year.

Approval of Minutes Ms. Breen made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 13, 2012; Mr. Pedone seconded; all in favor. **Voted 3-0-2**

Ms. Breen made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Meeting of August 21, 2012 as amended with discussion – Mr. Pedone pointed out the Budget Sub-Committee was incorrectly listed. It should reflect Mr. Pedone; Ms. Palumbo seconded; all in favor. **Voted 5-0-0**

Student Advisory Council Mr. Owanisian welcomed the members of the Student Advisory Council; Kelly Sorge, Rachel O'Connor and Tyler Army.

The Council members discussed issues pertaining to: the GSA, Helping Paws, WBAF, Lions Club Sightmobile, the Student Council's preparation of Homecoming and an Alumnae Brunch.

Community Input Members of the community gathered to show their support for retired librarian from Major Edwards Elementary School, Ann Marie Richardson, who recently passed away.

Community members proposed to name the Major Edwards Media Center and or the library after Ann Marie Richardson. One hundred and two letters of support were

presented to the School Committee for their review.

Former School Committee member Siobhan Bohannon suggested that a rocking chair and area with shelves could be designated; donating books in Ms. Richardson's name could be established.

Mr. Shaw made a motion to name the library at the Major Edwards Elementary School the "Ann Marie Richardson Library/Media Center", Mr. Pedone seconded; all in favor.
Voted 5-0-0

Mr. Owanisian suggested that an ad hoc committee be established, consisting of two school committee members, a Major Edwards' teacher, an administrator, a principal, and a member of the community.

Mr. Shaw made a motion to appoint the ad hoc committee, Ms. Palumbo seconded; all in favor.
Voted 5-0-0

Ms. Breen and Mr. Pedone expressed an interest in being on this committee.

Acknowledgement of Camera Crew

Mr. Shaw asked that if anyone would like to be on this committee, they should write a letter to the superintendent stating they are interested.

Mr. Owanisian suggested the letters should be received by the end of the week, September 21, 2012.

Highlight on Schools

Students, Brianna Corcoran and Owen O'Brien, were thanked for their help with the cameras along with Mr. Bokankowicz, who was not in attendance.

Ms. McCarthy introduced new staff from Major Edwards Elementary: Melissa Wallace – special education team chair/assistant principal, Andrea Mullin – life skills teacher, Sue Penney – third grade teacher, Elizabeth Markopoulos – special education teacher/grade 4, and Melissa Woolfrey – fifth grade science and social studies teacher.

Mr. LaBreck introduced new staff from the Middle School: William Nelson – life skills teacher/grades 6-8, Katie Luby – 8th grade math teacher, Janat Utey – 7th grade special education teacher, Nancy Gaines - 6th and 8th grade science teacher, Kevin Bjorklund – 8th grade special education teacher, and Ms. Jane Zell, a part-time art teacher who was unable to attend the meeting.

Mr. Murphy announced two new staff members, Todd Turcotte, athletic director and Carol Miller – special education teacher who were both unable to attend the meeting.

District Improvement Plan

Dr. Schaper presented the District Improvement Plan. The plan contains several SMART goals in the area of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. The overarching goal in this area is to provide system-wide leadership for curriculum, teaching, and

assessment aimed at continuous improvement of students' academic outcomes. We aim to ensure that our curriculum is tightly aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and toward that end we have established a SMART goal stating that by June 2013, our schools will publish a revised English/Language Arts Curriculum for grades K-12. In addition, by October, we will publish a document detailing a five year curriculum review cycle and process that will be used going forward in our district. A second strategic goal in this area is to promote instructional strategies that improve critical thinking and problem solving skills. This objective came directly from the vision established in our strategic planning work in the Spring. This set of goals is meant to help bring this vision to life in our classrooms. One SMART goal states that between September and December 2012, administrators will develop perspectives and routines that will allow them to assess classroom practices that support critical thinking and provide opportunities for engaging problem solving. A second goal is to establish a STEAM academy at the Middle/High School by August 2013. The third strategic objective in which we will be engaged this year is to increase the use of high impact literacy instructional techniques that lead to improved oral and written communication skills. Again, this objective was drawn from the vision that the community established in the Spring strategic planning work. SMART goals in this area include, By June 2013, we will conduct six days of embedded professional development and literacy coaching for teachers in grades K-8. Between January and June 2013, we will conduct 10 professional development learning sessions for administrators to deepen their skills to support teachers in the use of high impact literacy techniques. The last strategic objective in curriculum calls for the promotion of new, innovative, and emerging technology as vehicles for improving and facilitating communication by all members of the school community. The SMART goals for this objective are to install a wireless infrastructure in both schools, to document the use of the iPad cart, to develop policies that will support various technology initiatives, and to track and evaluate staff use of technology.

In the area of management and operations where we promote the learning and growth of all students and the success of staff by ensuring a safe, efficient learning environment and the use of resources that are appropriate we established goals to develop and implement a robust teacher mentoring program for new teachers that meets monthly and to establish and support a professional development program that allows exemplary teachers to offer professional development to their colleagues in order to foster excellence in teaching across the district. We will also develop our budget by March and align it to the mission, vision and goals of the school district.

Dr. Schaper reported that we strive for a professional culture that promotes success for all students by nurturing and sustaining a school culture of reflective practice, high expectations, and continuous learning for staff. Our SMART goals are meant to help us achieve this. By May of 2013, all of our administrators will be trained to use various protocols for interaction with teachers during the evaluation process. We will also be piloting the use of the new educator evaluation process during 2012-2013 for the superintendent and school administrators. We have a goal that helps us to focus attention on our shared vision. This goal is that throughout the school year, we engage administrators, staff, students, families and community members in a dialogue to help internalize a shared educational vision around preparation for college and careers.

Mr. Shaw expressed a strong interest in the “STEAM” program, as it would bring a college level program, such as WPI, to our district.

Mr. LaBreck explained that they do have a program at WPI for 11th and 12th graders. He stated that it’s one of the avenues they are pursuing and there is a lot of work to do before they make that presentation.

Ms. Palumbo also seconded that desire to see what is entailed in the implantation of the “STEAM” program.

Dr. Schaper stated that there will be a planning group that works on the plan for the STEAM academy. She felt that some of the information that will be presented in October of 2012 by Mr. LaBreck would be how this group shall be assembled. She stated that Mr. LaBreck has been establishing some relationships with people in the college community, and that they would also like to involve parents and members of the community who have a special interest in this area.

Mr. LaBreck will have a written report for the School Committee next month; however he will not be in attendance at that meeting due to Nature’s Classroom.

Ms. Palumbo motioned to accept the West Boylston Public Schools District Improvement Plan dated 2012-2013, Mrs. Breen seconded the motion; all in favor.

Voted 5-0-0

**School Committee
Targets**

Mr. Owanisian explained that School Committee Targets were approved last year at the School Committee Retreat. He stated that the changes were very minor. The only difference was a change language in item five to reflect more detail about issues that may be worked on this year regarding legislation that may impact small school districts.

Mr. Owanisian explained that target number five speaks to the needs of a small school district. He stated that Dr. Schaper was in agreement that what we had last year was overly specific and not entirely relevant to the current issues.

The other proposed change was to delete the goal of exploring the advantages and disadvantages of joining a regional vocational school district as this work has been substantially accomplished.

Mr. Owanisian stated that Mr. Shaw and Mrs. Breen put a lot of energy into approaching both Assabet and the Montachusett School District. The work had been concluded, and those involved felt it was not productive at this point.

Mr. Shaw stated that they did not see much of an opportunity to joining at this time, but did not want to eliminate the idea for the future.

Mr. Owanisian supported Mr. Shaw’s suggestion, but recommended the language

pertaining to that target be reworded.

Mr. Pedone motioned to hold the document until next month's Committee Meeting where the addition will be made with the intention to approve same, Mr. Shaw seconded; all in favor. **Voted 5-0-0**

**Request
regarding
MIAA Hockey**

Mr. Murphy brought a request from the Athletic Department regarding joining through the MIAA's cooperative program, allowing West Boylston students to join a collaborative hockey team.

Mr. Murphy advised the Committee that we currently have co-op teams with Tahanto, but that we do not have one for ice hockey. He stated that last spring there was a group of parents who approached the athletic department last year about the possibility of establishing a co-op team with Assabet.

An inquiry was made and Assabet informed West Boylston that they had invited Maynard to join their co-operative hockey program. They expressed a willingness to include West Boylston students on their hockey team as well. The athletic director at Assabet took this proposal to the District E Hockey Committee for the MIAA, who reviewed the request and gave West Boylston and Maynard permission to participate.

Mr. Murphy and Mr. Turcotte both agreed with this proposal and suggested that this is a one year pilot type program, and if approved by the School Committee at a later date, the program could continue beyond the first year.

Mr. Murphy stated there would be no West Boylston athletic funding to support the co-op; parents would be responsible for the athletic fee, which is \$725.00 paid to Assabet, as well as any transportation or other costs that might be incurred during hockey season. Students would need to stay in good standing under all West Boylston school policies including all eligibility requirements. Students would also be required to adhere to all MIAA requirements and standards.

Mr. Murphy expressed his support for the establishment of a co-op ice hockey team with Assabet and Maynard.

Mr. Owanisian asked Mr. Murphy what the name of the team would be. Mr. Murphy advised it would remain the Assabet Aztecs.

Mr. Owanisian stated that he liked the proposal and felt that it would certainly broaden the athletic programs in West Boylston.

A parent, Jean Derosier-Delaney, spoke on behalf of her son. She stated that he would love to attend the co-op hockey program. She also stated that he had many friends who would consider attending West Boylston through school choice into the district if they were allowed to play hockey.

Mr. Shaw asked Mr. Murphy if knew how many students were currently interested in

the hockey program. Mr. Murphy stated that at present he knows of four (4) students who would be interested in joining the co-op hockey program.

Mr. Shaw also asked if there was a need at Assabet for additional players, or if it would help their team to be more competitive to bring in additional resources.

Mr. Murphy explained that he was also concerned about losing students to Assabet, but he spoke with the Assabet athletic director and she shared with him that it would actually allow West Boylston to keep their students in the district.

Ms. Breen expressed her reservations about the program because Assabet, in the past, has had a way of approaching the West Boylston students that has not always been in our best interests. She stated that she was also concerned about transportation.

Mr. Murphy explained the parents would have to be totally responsible for getting the children to the games/practices, but that hockey parents were quite used to that and they would also have to do whatever Assabet requires with regards to travel.

Ms. Breen also expressed a concerned with the registration fee of \$725.00, especially for families whose child would like to play, but who cannot afford that fee. She asked if Assabet would be able to offer families from out of district with financial assistance.

Mr. Murphy stated we would never deny the opportunity for anyone to be able to play. He stated that Assabet would follow their policy on waivers for their athletes, and under these conditions, our students would be considered their athletes.

Ms. Breen explained that she wanted to make it understood that West Boylston would not be funding ice hockey program and we would not be providing transportation.

Mr. Shaw echoed Ms. Breen's feelings, but stated he was fully in support of the ice hockey program.

Mr. Owanisian asked Mr. Murphy if Mr. Turcotte was also in favor of the program and Mr. Murphy explained that he was.

Mr. Pedone motioned to approve the MHS hockey team with Assabet, Mr. Shaw seconded. **Voted 5-0-0**

Communication & Reports

Mr. Owanisian called for the report of the High School Principal.

Mr. Murphy discussed his report regarding the first two weeks of school. He talked about his presentation on how you become more successful in high school – the theme of which was “Resilience”.

Mr. Murphy shared that they are planning West Boylston's “In It to End It” relay for cancer and scholarships. They have met with representatives of the American Cancer Society to begin planning for this year's event.

Ms. Breen asked if there was any trouble with students completing their summer reading. Mr. Murphy explained the children had several books to choose from and that they chose books that would allow them to read with a purpose.

Mr. Owanisian called for the report of the Middle School Associate Principal.

Mr. LaBreck advised that the middle school had a wonderful start to the school year. He explained that the Phillips family, whose son Zak is an 8th grader at the middle school, has organized a couple of fund raisers for the American Diabetes Association such as a car smash and a Walk to Stamp Out Diabetes at UMass. Zak has also created a team for the American Diabetes Walk to Stamp Out Cancer at UMass Medical Center on September 29, 2012.

Mr. LaBreck stated that a Erica Ivans, an 8th grader at the school, brought information about a contest to win a Taylor Swift concert on campus and to win a \$10,000.00 grant for the music department in West Boylston. People can go online where the school is registered and cast a vote to try and win the school a concert and the \$10,000.00 grant for the music department.

Mr. Murphy thanked guidance secretary, Tara Vavruska for her support to the students, staff and administration. He stated that she recently obtained a position as a guidance counselor in Westborough, Massachusetts. Mr. Murphy advised the committee that they are in the process of interviewing people to fill the position of guidance secretary and hoped to fill the position sometime within the upcoming week.

Mr. Owanisian called for the report of the Major Edwards Principal.

Ms. McCarthy stated that their first two weeks at Major Edwards have been very successful. She thanked the West Boylston Police and Fire Department for their presence during this time and for being able to assist the staff in having the children exit the building safely during a fire drill.

Ms. McCarthy wanted to remind parents to check the school website if they require information with regards to the school calendar, handbook, PTA and for her Blog where she will include her communications as to anything she is sending home.

Mr. Owanisian called for the report of the Special Education Director.

Ms. Traina thanked the staff in the Superintendent's Office, most especially her assistant Jean Pray. Ms. Traina explained that she has been spending time in both school buildings, making herself visible to the staff in both locations. She especially wanted to thank Melissa Wallace who, she feels, is doing an outstanding job in her position at Major Edwards. Ms. Traina also thanked the staff in the middle high school. She stated that the staff is doing an excellent job.

Mr. Owanisian called for the report of the Business Manager.

Ms. Kristoff stated that in the packets for the School Committee there is a report for August 31, 2012. She also prepared the year end report for the Budget Subcommittee.

She stated the final version of the end of year report will be completed by November.

Ms. Kristoff explained to the new School Committee members, that an encumbrance is a commitment through a purchase order and an approval through the principals and the superintendent of schools on funding reserved for what we've already committed ourselves to, and it becomes an expenditure is when we make payment.

Mr. Owanisian asked Ms. Kristoff if she thought things were on track.

Ms. Kristoff indicated that we monitor encumbrances and expenditures throughout the year. We are tracking encumbrances. We are on track with the salaries. She stated some special education expenditures will be updated but it usually takes a couple of months to put that together so that we can be as accurate as we possibly can.

Ms. Kristoff stated that she would like to compliment Ms. Traina. She explained that Ms. Traina spent a couple of days in her office going through her budget line by line and worked extensively on the grants. Ms. Traina wrote a good amount of grants over the summer. These grants are already in for approval and are ready for payment.

Ms. Kristoff advised we do have two buses that are quite full - approximately 60 students on each bus and she will be advising parents where changes need to be made. She will be looking at moving some of those students to other buses to relieve the overcrowding. She explained that we do have registrations still coming in and we do have seats available.

Mr. Owanisian asked Ms. Kristoff for further clarification with regard to an item being fully encumbered; whether that would necessarily indicate that the budget would be overstated – where some items seemed more encumbered than others.

Ms. Kristoff stated that that was just in preparation of the purchase orders as in instructional supplies, These purchases are not made until July 1st.

Ms. Kristoff stated that once we have the salaries in, 70% of the budget would actually be encumbered.

Mr. Shaw asked a question with regard to supplies. He wanted to know why the children have gone almost two weeks without their school planners, which has affected the students' ability to do their homework. He wanted to know if it was a process issue where we didn't order them in time or it was delayed.

Mr. LaBreck explained it was because the order was put in later than usual and they will need to order them earlier next year for them to come in on time.

Ms. Kristoff explained that the companies the district orders from do get

overwhelmed, as we cannot actually place an order until July 1st.

Mr. Owanisian called for the report of the Superintendent.

Dr. Schaper stated that she also felt it was a very nice start to the school year. She explained the smooth opening to the year doesn't happen without the work of many people. She echoed the praise that she heard earlier in the night for the West Boylston Police and Fire Department. She felt that the police managed the traffic flow around the school very well. She also thanked the Fire Department for running the drills on opening day at both facilities.

Dr. Schaper expressed praise for the hard working and dedicated teachers for preparing their classrooms well in advance of opening day so that every child came into a beautiful learning space on the very first morning.

Dr. Schaper singled out teachers at Major Edwards whose classrooms were in the T-wing where the new windows were being installed. The windows were being installed until just a few days before school started. The colleagues at Major Edwards banded together to make sure that those teachers could get their rooms ready in less than half the time that would normally have taken to get all of that organization done.

Dr. Schaper publically thanked the former superintendent, Tom Kane, for all of the work he did to ensure that the window project would be completed without disruptions to the education of the students.

Dr. Schaper mentioned that we moved this year to a new school management system called "School Brains". This system allows us to gather data that we have been holding in many separate data bases and accounts into one integrated data base. Dr. Schaper stated that the bulk of the work to get this system off the ground was managed by Eric Bokankowicz, our Technology Director, who has been simultaneously been managing the installation of our wireless, and she expressed her thanks.

Dr. Schaper explained that as technology is changing, our district is trying to change and adapt. She stated that we are now using Google Mail and the Google Suite of Tools for Education- Google Apps for Education. She stated that it will be cost savings to us. Many of the teachers are now becoming aware of how they can use the tools to assist them.

Dr. Schaper also welcomed a new administrative assistant to the Superintendent's Office, Marie Johnson; Marie will be taking the minutes at our School Committee meetings this year.

Dr. Schaper pointed out a memo in the School Committee packet which she received from Michelle Gangai regarding the negotiations for the paraprofessionals' bargaining unit. The letter indicates their interest in beginning negotiations for a new contract. Dr. Schaper requested a motion to allow her to respond to them and let them know that we agree to begin bargaining for a successor contract.

Mr. Shaw made a motion to allow Superintendent Schaper to be allowed to respond to Ms. Gangai with regards to bargaining for a new contract, Ms. Breen seconded; all in favor. **Voted 5-0-0**

School Committee Updates

Mr. Owanisian called for School Committee updates.

Mr. Pedone stated that there was nothing general to update at this time.

Mr. Shaw stated Mr. Pedone and he, through the direction of Mr. Owanisian, decided to meet and discuss what was going on in the communities with regard to budget issues. All involved felt it was critical to meet and review the West Boylston Public School budget, as well as the procedures for the budget.

Mr. Shaw and the Budget Sub-Committee wanted to report to the community that they met with Dr. Schaper and Ms. Kristoff, to consider the fiscal procedures of the district and to review the audits.

Mr. Shaw explained that the budget audits were outstanding. The processes are in place and there is no major risk for fiscal error. He explained that our school system is different than a regional school system because the finances are run through the town.

Mr. Pedone stated that he felt the Sub-Committee felt the need to do this to show the community we wanted to take a pro-active approach in making sure we did not have the same type of issues that other districts have had.

Mr. Shaw thanked Ms. Kristoff for coming in and explaining details for the members of the committee.

Mr. Owanisian directed attention to the Sub-Committee Schedule. This document was labeled as a draft because there were so many dates involved. Mr. Owanisian asked that if any member sees their name under a sub-committee, if they have an issue with any of the dates, they should provide feedback to Dr. Schaper so that dates may be modified. Mr. Owanisian stated that he would like to try to finalize this by next month.

Mr. Owanisian stated that he would be continuing the Channel 12 Spotlight on Schools this year because it was so well received last year. He stated that they would begin in October with Dr. Schaper.

Ms. Breen stated that she had nothing else to report.

Ms. Palumbo also stated that she had nothing further to report.

At 9:04 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Owanisian that the committee goes into to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining, returning to open session only to adjourn. **Voted on a roll call. Mr. Pedone, yes, Mr. Shaw, yes, Mr. Owanisian, yes, Mrs. Breen, yes, Mrs. Palumbo, yes.**

Adjournment

The School Committee returned from Executive Session and a motion to adjourn was made at 10:35 by Mrs. Breen, seconded by Mr. Pedone. **Voted 5-0-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Johnson
Recording Secretary