

A. Extra Passenger (s) on School Bus Discussion.

Chris Desjardins moved Item **VII. New Business** - A. Extra Passenger (s) on the School Bus – Discussion to the front of the meeting, further he asked that those in attendance if they want to speak to please come to the podium and state your name and to sign in if they have not done so. This issue was brought to the committee's attention regarding bus drivers that have their children riding on the bus with them during their routes. A couple of weeks ago Dr. Beach sent a notice to the bus company stating that if the child is not a student of Ware schools they could no longer ride the bus.

First to speak, Ross Kiely a business representative from the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1459 explained that this issue recently came to their attention and are concerned of the recent the policy directive from the superintendent's office, changing what was previous a privilege to bus driver to carry their own small children on their bus routes. In order to fit the profile of a bus driver you have to go to work very early in the morning and then again in the afternoon this basically prevents bus drivers from having a first shift or a second shift job. There is a general practice which includes Springfield, Holyoke and little bit of Chicopee (with some explanation), Belchertown, Palmer, Pathfinder and previously Ware and Granby that allowed their employees to carry small children in car seats under very stringent conditions, which are: They have to be in an approved safety seats, strapped in, they have to be of a certain age at least 1 year old, conditions set by your contractor so that this practice is done in a safe manner. Unfortunately, if this policy directive is allowed to stand or if the policy is expanded, we have two drivers that will be immediately impacted and may have to resign. One of the conditions of hiring is that you may bring your child to work with you, this has been the practice at least 10 years. There was an agreement with the previous superintendent that you could bring your child with you and has been the practice for at least 10 years. We ask you to please reconsider this policy directive and allow the contractor to set the stringent rules that have been very effective for many years.

Brian Winslow mentioned that according to the contract, drivers are not to be permitted to carry any persons other than persons authorized by the Superintendent while carrying pupils, and that she is well within her right contractually who is to be carried on the bus. He fully supports her decision, and also has some safety concerns.

Dr. Beach reported that there are 355 school district in the state of MA and 119 bus companies. She received sent out an inquiry to the superintendents in the state, and about 40 responses (ATTACHED). Some are done case by case and indeed there was one district Dighton-Rehoboth, stopped allowing the practice because there was a recent incident. She has also been told that the previous superintendent allowed the practice but was not able to find any evidence, not a letter of agreement or memorandum of understanding.

Aaron Sawabi voiced his concerns. If the liability is addressed and also the agreement is consistent with practice he does not have a problem with it but if the

committee is for it everything should line up. Chris Desjardins added that his heart goes out to the bus drivers affected by this, we need to make sure the kids are safe on the bus which he believes they are, but also that the town is protected against any liability. He agrees with Mr. Sawabi that the committee can't make a decision on the issue until they know if the town and/or school district is protected from any liability. The agreement does give the full authority to the superintendent and she has made a decision.

Mr. Kiely commented that in the room today are some of the stewards from other Western MA facilities with 15-40 years of seniority and to the best of our combined knowledge in Western MA there has not been an incident. Aaron Sawabi asked him if he thought it was fair to address the liability. Mr. Kiely answered absolutely. Danielle Souza then asked if the bus drivers saw a copy of the contract between the school and First Student. Joan Crowther, answered they do not get the money part but the parts of what they can and cannot do. Mrs. Souza then commented that they were aware that this could happen because some of the communication that has been received seems that they may not have known. Ms. Crowther added that as far as insurance First Student does and will cover the children and if she was to receive a complaint that driver would be suspended from bringing their child.

Andy Paquette explained First Student provides insurance based on specifications and what this agreement says that the driver will not sue First Student but it waives it's regard to a third party, the third party would not be the school system.

Dr. Beach further explained that the contract says drivers shall not be permitted to carry any persons other than persons authorized by the superintendent while carrying pupils. She then read part of her response to First Student, Ware Bus Drivers may transport their school aged children attending Ware Schools on the parent/guardian bus route, with regards to those children not attending Ware particularly those in a car seat, consequently the superintendent does not authorize the transport of students that are in car seats.

There were different scenarios discussed around liability and safety issues and was subsequently agreed by the committee members to speak to Attorney Fred Dupere.

Safety coordinator for First Student Pam Keith spoke at the podium and offered to bring in log sheets of drivers to show that they inspect the car seats daily. She also explained the training drivers and students are given. Chris Desjardins asked her if these are special car seats for buses. She answered they can not be the bucket style aside from that they are not different from passenger car seats. Bus driver Christine Skaza spoke of her own experience as a parent having her children ride the bus with her and in the ten years she has been doing this she has never had an incident. Additionally her children are school choiced into the district and that other bus drivers are doing the same and could be a real benefit to the school. Noreen Ford from First Student followed up with bus evacuation procedure.

In going forward the committee decided that this is something that will not be resolved tonight and that some research needs to be done and to consult with our attorney.

IV. Sub-Committee Discussion:

Danielle Souza reported that the email from Mike Brown asking to update the technology policies JBHR and JICJ needs to be voted on.

Motion by Danielle Souza and seconded by Aaron Sawabi to accept the amended changes to policy JICJ and JBHR as prepared. 5 members approved. Motion Carries.

Future meetings: October 5, 2010 5:30 PM and October 19, 2010 5:30 PM in the WJSHS library.

V. Reports/Updates.

A. Report from Student Council Member.

In summary, Kara Rys reported the following:

SMK

- Celebration of Harvest Week found Ms. Biron, Ms. Nicholas and Mrs. Malin's classes shucking corn on Monday, September 27th. In addition, our small but healthy cabbage patch will contribute its harvest for soup to be consumed on Friday, October 1st.
- Open house for grades 1-3 will take place on Thursday, September 30th from 6-7:30 PM. A book fair will run concurrently on the same evening.
- Pre-school and Kindergarten Open House will take place on Thursday, October 14th from 5-30-7:00 PM.

WMS

- On Friday, September 24th, Ware Middle School was visited by the ReMax hot air balloon, Big Max. All students and staff assembled on the softball field and watched as the balloon was inflated and tethered rides were given to staff. Afterward the pilots visited classrooms and provided background on the science of hot air ballooning.
- 12 six graders have been chosen to serve on the School Leadership Council. Candidates went through a rigorous application process that included getting staff recommendations, writing an essay and an interview with Mr. Jordan.

WJSHS

- Open House was Thursday, September 23rd and was well attended.
- PSATs will be held October 13th for all sophomores. Juniors who want to sign up; tomorrow is the last day cost is \$15.
- Senior sessions are continuing as well as junior sessions to research and talk about future plans.
- PTSSA and Jr.PTSSA meetings take place tonight in the conference room.

- Progress reports come out Friday.

B. Report from Superintendent.

- The administration has been spending significant time preparing for DESE a Coordinated Program Review in three areas: Special Education, English Language Education, and Civil Rights. Additionally, another component is a review of the district's fiscal procedures. The reviews are on a six year cycle. The on-site portion is the week of October 25th. We have already submitted extensive documentation. Later this Spring there will also be a review of Title I.
- MCAS individual student reports went home last week including the new "Student Growth Performance" there is a tutorial on our web site, Parents Corner. We are still reviewing our data district wide and grade by grade. At the next meeting the principals will be giving a presentation on the 2010 MCAS results.
- SMK's Open House Grades 1-3 tomorrow night & October 14th for PreK-K.
- Last Friday Remax's Challenge the Wind Program was a success at WMS
- In your packets you have a copy of the last communication from NEASC where they voted to accept our five year progress report. Congratulations to the faculty and administration of WJSHS on a job well done, again.
- WPS and the Town of Ware are partnering in the area of technology support. WPS will be providing tech support to the town departments. A ten hour position will be added. We will bill the town for services provided.
- We received a donation of 11 reels of 1,000 feed each of cable wire from Quabbin Wire and Cable Company. This is a great donation for our technology infrastructure and has a monetary value of over \$700.00.
- Enrollment update: In grade 9 one female moved out of town and in grade 10 one female and one male moved out of town and in grade 10 one female is attending Penn Foster online High School.

C. Results of Operation.

Andy Paquette reported that attached is the August 31, 2010 results of operation. This budget reflects the personnel changes that occurred over the summer. It also takes into consideration the adjustments made at the state level regarding the funding of the district for FY11 and the EduJobs grants. However the amount we are receiving in the EduJobs resulted in a direct dollar-for-dollar reduction of the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund Grant; resulting in no increase in funding. The alarming thing is what will be left in School Choice and Circuit Breaker. FY2012 is going to be tough. Aaron Sawabi mentioned that we should schedule a budget subcommittee meeting soon to discuss.

Future meeting: October 7, 2010 in the Central Office at 7:30 AM.

VI. Old/Unfinished Business.

A. School Committee Goals 2010-2011.

Chris Desjardins reported that basically we will look at the goals we set for 2009-2010 and review them, then set new goals for 2010-2011. The comments you see on the column to the right are from Brian Winslow. Chris Desjardins then read each of the goals and committee members weighed in on whether the goal was met.

Motion by Danielle Souza and seconded by Aaron Sawabi to table the 2010-2011 school committee goals until our next meeting. All in favor. Motion carries.

B. After School Program.

Danielle Souza brought forward information regarding the YMCA Scanlon Valley after school program (ATTACHED). She is asking the committee and superintendent to allow the YMCA to send out a survey to parents in grades K-8 to see if there is an interest in having them have an after school program here in Ware. The program will be grades K-8 and housed in the WMS and is open to all students of Ware grades K-8 and financial aid is available. The program runs on a school calendar which means they are closed during school vacations, snow days and holidays.

Motion by Chris Desjardins and seconded by Aaron Sawabi to recess at 8:27 for a tape change. All in favor.

Chris Desjardins called the meeting back to order 8:28.

VII. Communications

A. Intern at the Ware Junior/Senior High School

Chris Desjardins received a form, which he handed over to Vice Chairman Sawabi because this is a Teacher Union issue, we have a WJSHS 7th Grade Math Teacher that wants to serve as an administrative intern at the Ware Public Schools starting October 18 and serving in that capacity until November 24, 2010 and after the internship will return to his seventh grade math position. The math teacher will not receive his teacher's pay during this time period and will have to pay for his insurance but will retain his seniority. Aaron Sawabi then signed the form to allow the internship.

VIII. Special Projects

B. School Choice.

There were no school choices updates tonight.

X. Other Business.

A. Schedule of Future Meetings.

- October 6, 2010 Regular Business Meeting
- October 27, 2010 Regular Business Meeting

MOTION by Chris Desjardins and seconded by Aaron Sawabi to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 P.M. All in favor.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

C. Desjardins.....yes
B. Winslow.....yes
J. Rys.....yes

A. Sawabi.....yes
D. Souza.....yes

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Mary Elizabeth Beach
Superintendent of Schools

_____, Chairman

