

To: Executive Board

From: W.E.A. Secretary

Re: Board Meeting, February 1, 2021

The meeting was held via Google Meet and was called to order at 3:50 pm by President Lori Lyncosky. The following members were present: (see attached).

REPORTS

MTA

Paul Ryan shared that the WEA Winter Conference is still scheduled to take place this year. It will be held online with classes being held all month. PDPs are available and a variety of different classes are being offered. For more information go to the MTA website.

MEMBERSHIP

Pam Collins (formally Tesko) reported that all membership forms are being done electronically this year. We had 5 new members recently.

SECRETARY

A motion to accept the January 2021 meeting minutes was made by Pam Collins and seconded Kate Cartee. A vote was taken and the minutes were accepted.

TREASURER

The Treasurer's Report for January 2021 was presented and Kate Cartee moved to receive the report. Christy Roselli seconded. A vote was taken and the report was received.

PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Kristen Biancuzzo reported that there are no current grievances.

WEBPAGE:

Tom Dearborn is keeping the WEA webpage current. Check it out for all WEA up to date info.

MTA's Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee:

Timothy Thomas shared that the MTA's Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee has been working with the Governance Committee reviewing legislation. They have also formed a book club and are reading the books below. Any member interested in joining the book club can contact Tim.

EMAC Book Club Readings:

How to be Antiracist by Dr. Ibram Kendi

Culturally Responsive Teaching & The Brain by Zaretta Hammond

Webinars to check out to enhance our professional growth:

Responsive Schooling for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

<https://media.edweb.net/edWebinar/?view=20210127edweb41>

Addressing Diversity, Inclusion, and Social Justice in Changing School Communities

<https://media.edweb.net/edWebinar/?view=20210127edweb54>

NEW BUSINESS

1. The latest MOA

A. Since EMFLA was not extended to public sector employees if a faculty or staff member contracts COVID due to close contact in the school setting the employee will be placed in a paid status for up to 10 days. If the illness period lasts longer than that they employee will have to use their benefit time (personal /sick time).

B. COVID Vaccinations

No employee will be subject to mandatory inoculation. It's your choice...choose to get the COVID vaccine or not...it's fine. However, if you choose not to get it and a student in your class or on your team tests positive you will be subject to a mandatory quarantine and you will have to use your benefit time to cover the absence(s).

C. New DESE regulations on Student Learning Time

This new language will modify the initial language that was agreed upon. The district is confident that employees are more than meeting the onus of previous and current time expectations both in hybrid and when we are in the fully remote sessions; however, when the DESE has been going into districts and looking at reopening MOAs they are looking at what language is being used. We want to make sure they don't have any reason to dig deeper into our laundry than they absolutely have to. HOWEVER, this is a state regulation and must be adhered to, the district didn't change anything the state did.

2. MOA regarding Student Enrollment Fluidity

- a. Please recall in one of the last MOAs we voted to allow students who were in a hybrid model to remain with their teacher in the event that they moved into full remote. We also noted that these same students could in fact, re-enroll into hybrid from full remote at some point in time.
- b. As we're moving toward the third term/third trimester/second semester at whichever level you're at we are going to see more of this.

3. Pandemic Professionalism

- Please keep in mind that:

EVERY single faculty and staff member employed in the district is under personal and professional stressors this includes cafeteria workers whose hours have been ravaged, to custodians who are as understaffed as we are and are being asked to work double shifts to sanitize as well as covering their areas, nurses are being constantly called upon to help at the DPH as well as do what they do in the schools, our Unit D staff is pushed and pulled and asked to cover classes and fill in for sick colleagues in both the in person and remote settings. Our building subs and fellow teachers are covering classes and Covid rooms and prepping and doing everything that we're all doing. With this said, please do your very best to:

- Remember that every person who is collecting a Westfield Public Schools pay check is working as hard as they personally can.
- Refrain from judging the job that a colleague is doing. Our job is to do the best job we can. If you can find a way to help a colleague or pick them up – do that. If you can't find that kindness in your heart, then by all means just walk away...politely.
- Everyone's stress is their own... we're all in the same ship and we all need to recognize that we are all doing our best
- Administration is under the same stress as the rest of us and then some. Please remember that they are administration and the educational leaders of the building whether we are in a pandemic or not. Our stress and the pandemic do not give anyone license to send emails that are negative in tone and question a principal's response or lack thereof to your personal situation. If you are feeling like you need to send an email that is of questionable content or tone please have a colleague read it before you hit send. An administrator's ability to discipline you based on what they see as insubordination is a charge that is next to impossible to defend, especially if there is a snarky email trail that goes on for a week or more.

4. Travel outside of MA right now – please make sure you follow the Governor’s Travel Orders upon returning.

OPEN FLOOR INQUIRIES/Reminders:

- Deb Yelin suggested that members not wait to get the vaccine if they plan to get it.
“Get it where and when you can.”
- Today was a Remote Early Release Snow Day...which means it counted, and we were paid for, a FULL day. It has come to the WEA’s attention that many members took today off. Please be sure to note, that since we were paid for and this counted as a FULL day, those who took today off will be docked/charged a FULL day.

A motion to adjourn was made by Kristen Biancuzzo and seconded by Pam Collins. The meeting was adjourned at 4:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Aimee Blair
WEA Secretary