

Westerly School Committee Meeting
December 3, 2025
Westerly Town Hall
Regular Session

School Committee Members:

Leslie Dunn, Chair
Michael Ober, Vice Chair
Timothy Killam, Clerk
Angela Goethals
Joseph Jackson
Peter Nero
Lori Wycall

Also in Attendance:

Mark Garceau, Superintendent
William Nardone, Esquire
Steven Morrone, Assistant Superintendent
Rose Falcone, Recording Secretary

1. Leslie Dunn called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.
Roll Call: Leslie Dunn, Michael Ober, Timothy Killam, Angela Goethals, Joseph Jackson, Peter Nero and Lori Wycall.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
L. Wycall led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Westerly Public Schools Mission
P. Nero read: "To create an inspiring, challenging and supportive environment where students are encouraged and assisted in reaching their highest potential."
4. Student's Report
Student Brady Casady shared information about the pep rally, football team statistics, and gave a winter sports overview. He congratulated Assistant Principal John Connell for being named Rhode Island Association of School Principals 2026 Assistant Principal of the Year.
5. Presentations
 - a. Westerly High School 2025 Rhode Island Interscholastic League Division II Super Bowl Football Championship Team
Coaches and members of the Westerly High School Championship Football Team were congratulated and recognized.

A resolution honoring WHS Assistant Principal John Connell for being named Rhode Island Association of School Principals 2026 Assistant Principal of the Year was read.

- b. RICAS/SAT Presentation
Assistant Superintendent Steven Morrone, Elementary Principals Giuseppe Gencarelli, Jenn Enck and Audrey Faubert, and Middle School Principal Desiree Derix shared English Language Arts and Math test results sharing bright spots, gaps to close, and plans for improvement. High School Principal Kellie Moulin, High School Assistant Principals Kevin Cronin and John Connell and Dean of Teaching and Learning Tony Lementowicz shared SAT English Language Arts and Math test results sharing bright

spots, gaps to close and plans for improvement. Director of Pupil Personnel Christina Mathieu spoke about the increased collaboration happening between special education and general education teachers to help close gaps. Discussion ensued throughout the presentations.

c. WHS Program of Studies

High School Principal Kellie Moulin and Dean of Teaching and Learning Tony Lementowicz reviewed the proposed new courses (AP-Precalculus, Mathematical Modeling 1, Advanced Mathematical Modeling, Pre-AP World History and Geography, AP Business with Personal Finance, Entrepreneurship, Computer Essentials & Artificial Intelligence), other changes, course deletions, and course shelving.

Leslie Dunn entertained a motion to approve the WHS Program of Studies. T. Killam so moved, seconded by A. Goethals. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

6. Open Forum: Comments shall be limited to School Committee agenda items only.

- Robert Chiaradio spoke about his disagreement regarding changing the minutes due to derogatory use of words, truth, negative language, and his disappointment in School Committee members.

a. Committee Members' Response
Discussion ensued.

7. Assistant Superintendent's Report: District Curriculum and Instructional Updates
No report.

8. Superintendent's Report: District Priorities, Staff and Student Recognition
Mark Garceau spoke about a recent meeting held regarding the revisions to the electronic communication devices policy, which will be brought to the School Committee for an upcoming first reading. He also addressed the importance of preparing students and parents for the changes in the updated policy.

9. Financial Report: Discussion/Action/Potential Vote
No report.

10. Consent Agenda: Action/Vote

- a. Approval of Executive Minutes (11/19/25)
- b. Approval of Minutes (11/19/25)
- c. Home School Approvals

Leslie Dunn entertained a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. M. Ober so moved, seconded by A. Goethals. The motion passed 6-1 (L. Wycall opposed).

11. New Business: Discussion/Action/Potential Vote

- a. RIIL Rules and Regulations, Article 2: The Principal & Article 3: Eligibility
L. Wycall reviewed recent updates to the RIIL Rules and Regulations, the role of principals, and the need for a protocol or policy to determine athletic eligibility in a way that protects students and ensures consistent handling of all cases. Discussion ensued.

L. Wycall made a motion to direct the Superintendent to put together a draft policy to indicate who is eligible for sports based on boys' sports, girls' sports, and co-ed teams with intramural sports being excluded, seconded by M. Ober. Discussion ensued. The motion passed 5-2 (M. Ober, L. Dunn opposed).

b. Electric School Bus Purchases

Attorney Nardone reported that this issue had already been addressed, noting that the capital request was amended and voted on to remove the purchase of electric buses. He reviewed the procedure for reconsidering a vote, emphasizing that such a motion must be made immediately after the original vote, or if no action has been taken pursuant to that vote. Because the capital request has been submitted and acted upon, the matter cannot be reconsidered. He continued with an explanation of the statutory requirements that capital expenditures are based on dollar amount, life expectancy, and other criteria and that bus purchases belong in the capital request rather than the operating budget.

L. Wycall made a motion to table agenda item 11b and 11c, seconded by J. Jackson. L. Wycall amended the motion to table agenda item 11b, seconded by J. Jackson. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

c. Transfer of Fund Balance to FY26 Operating Budget in the amount of \$244,000.00
Discussion ensued. L. Wycall made a motion to table item 11c, seconded by J. Jackson. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

d. Town Council Communication

There was discussion about the legally appropriate method for addressing Town Council remarks concerning school matters. Attorney Nardone noted that the School Committee is permitted to respond only in the context of a posted meeting with a relevant agenda item, and that any such response would be issued by the chair on behalf of the committee.

12. Correspondence

- State Street School was commended for their recent Open House (Killam)
- Female Student Athlete Concerns (Dunn)
- StageDogs Play Concern (Wycall)
- PPAC Performance (Dunn)

13. Committee/Liaison Reports

- A Finance Subcommittee Meeting is scheduled for December 10, 2025 (5:00 p.m.)

14. Future Agenda Items

- Ratify/Confirm WHS Program of Studies Vote (Nardone)
- RI DEM Grant (Wycall)
- Grade 5 Recess (Goethals)
- School Committee Correspondence/Superintendent Correspondence included in agenda backup (Killam)

- Planning Board Members invited to a meeting for Bus Garage discussion (Killam)
15. Open Forum: Non-agenda item comments allowed.
- Jennifer Wood (RI Center for Justice Executive Director/Attorney) addressed the applicable Rhode Island statutes, the judicial decision, and the RIIL framework, and clarified Westerly Public Schools' legal responsibilities should an eligibility policy be adopted. She stated that the district may not engage in or permit discriminatory eligibility determinations, has no authority over eligibility decisions for other districts, and cannot empower coaches or principals to discriminate against students participating in teams outside the district.
 - Robert Chiaradio spoke about his belief that RIDE's transgender protocol violates federal law and Title IX, RIIL rules, safety of students, a girls' soccer game, Title IX, and read his suggested policy.
 - Diane Goldsmith challenged the myth that girls are weaker than boys, noting that many girls successfully compete with boys, such as the UConn Huskies women's team, which trains with the men's team. She urged that all students be allowed to play, stressing that transgender kids just want to be athletes.
- a. Committee Members' Response
Discussion ensued.
16. Adjournment
Leslie Dunn entertained a motion to adjourn at 8:39 p.m. T. Killam so moved, seconded by A. Goethals. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

These are the minutes of the School Committee meeting identified above as approved and adopted by the School Committee on December 17, 2025.



Timothy Killam
Clerk

Details of the aforesaid proceedings are available on the website video.