

WESTPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION

***AGENDA**

(Agenda Subject to Modification in Accordance with Law)

PUBLIC CALL TO ORDER: 6:30 p.m. Staples High School, Principal's Conference Room 1025C

ANTICIPATED EXECUTIVE SESSION: Strategies for Negotiations

RESUME PUBLIC SESSION

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Staples High School, Cafeteria B (Room 301), 7:30 p.m.

VOTE TO APPOINT NEW BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER

SWEARING-IN OF NEW BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER Patty Strauss

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM BOARD AND ADMINISTRATION

PUBLIC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS (15 MINUTES)

MINUTES: December 3, 2012

DISCUSSION:

1. Bus Transportation Policies and Procedures (Encl.) Dr. Landon

PRESENTATION:

1. K -5: Benchmarking (Encl.) Ms. Gilcrest
• Elementary Class Sizes Mr. Bayers
• Kindergarten Scheduling Ms. Bell
• Instructional Minutes – Academics and Special Areas Dr. Da Silva
Ms. Droller
Mr. Jones
Members of Elementary Leadership Team

2. S.T.E.M.: Proposed Middle School Elective Offering (Encl.) Lis Comm
Dr. Rosen
Dr. Scheetz
Ms. Szabo

DISCUSSION/ACTION:

1. Ratification of Contract with Westport Education Association Dr. Landon
Ms. Cion

DISCUSSION:

1. 2014-15 School Calendar Guidelines (Encl.) Dr. Landon

ADJOURNMENT

*A 2/3 vote is required to go to executive session, to add a topic to the agenda of a regular meeting, or to start a new topic after 10:30 p.m. The meeting can also be viewed on cable TV on channel 78; AT&T channel 99 and by video stream @www.westport.k12.ct.us

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION WELCOME USING THE FOLLOWING GUIDELINES:

- Comment on non-agenda topics will occur during the first 15 minutes *except* when staff or guest presentations are scheduled.
- Board will not engage in dialogue on non-agenda items.
- Public may speak as agenda topics come up for discussion or information.
- Speakers on non-agenda items are limited to 2 minutes each, *except* by prior arrangement with chair.
- Speakers on agenda items are limited to 3 minutes each, *except* by prior arrangement with chair.
- Speakers must give name and use microphone.
- Responses to questions may be deferred if answers not immediately available.
- Public comment is normally not invited for topics listed for action after having been publicly discussed at one or more meetings.

WESTPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ELLIOTT LANDON
Superintendent of Schools

110 MYRTLE AVENUE
WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT 06880
TELEPHONE: (203) 341-1010
FAX: (203) 341-1029

To: Members of the Board of Education
From: Elliott Landon
Subject: School Bus Transportation: Policies and Procedures
Date: December 17, 2012

The Board of Education has asked me to address our school bus transportation policies and procedures as a follow-up to my memorandum to the Board of October 26, 2012. By way of background, this review of policies and procedures is related to an incident that occurred on the afternoon run of a Coleytown Middle School bus on Thursday, October 18.

I would like briefly to describe the procedures used by DATTCO in connection with bus driver hiring and supervision. As you know, DATTCO is responsible for the hiring and supervision of its drivers. Based on discussions with DATTCO, we understand that the procedures followed by DATTCO include:

- State and Federal Finger print check.
- Criminal check in and out of State for past criminal and driving convictions.
- National Sex Offenders website check.
- Department of Children and Families check.
- Past Employers Reference Checks.
- Drug and Alcohol Screening.

DATTCO also provides ongoing training and supervision of its drivers to ensure that all safety procedures involved with the driving of a bus and dealing with students are understood. Complaints or concerns of students, parents or staff regarding bus operations and/or bus drivers that are made to a building administrator are promptly brought to the attention of our school district Transportation Coordinator who, in cooperation with the DATTCO Terminal Manager, acts upon them as expeditiously as possible.

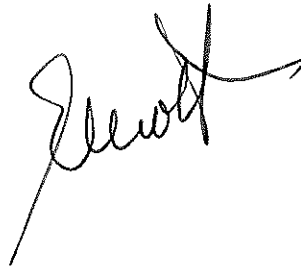
Prior to the morning of October 18, not a single complaint about the bus driver assigned to this CMS bus was registered by any parent or any student. On the morning of October 18, however, eight weeks into the school year, several students expressed concerns to school personnel regarding inappropriate comments made by the bus driver during the morning run on October 18.

The CMS building principal contacted the Westport Public Schools' Transportation Coordinator that morning to report the student complaints. The Transportation Coordinator immediately reported by telephone those complaints to the DATTCO Bus Terminal Manager. The DATTCO Bus Terminal Manager informed our Transportation Coordinator that DATTCO would investigate the matter with the driver at the first opportunity prior to the afternoon run.

DATTCO did not investigate the matter until after the conclusion of the afternoon run because the driver returned his bus to the Imperial Avenue lot, rather than the bus terminal, and did not return to the bus terminal until the completion of the afternoon run. The district received complaints from parents after the conclusion of the afternoon run at which time DATTCO immediately removed the driver from routes of the Westport Public Schools.

I am fully satisfied that everyone on the Westport Public Schools staff who played a role in this matter acted appropriately in accordance with reasonable procedures for looking into bus concerns. DATTCO and the school district have determined that any future concerns regarding bus driver behavior *will be communicated by telephone and in writing to the DATTCO Bus Terminal Manager with specific instructions to immediately remove the driver from service until DATTCO, in the presence of our Transportation Coordinator, has completed its investigation into the concerns.*

As has been our practice, we will continue to work with the school community and DATTCO to address any future student transportation concerns.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Smith", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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To: Members of the Board of Education
From: Elliott Landon
Subject: K-5 Benchmarking
Date: December 17, 2012

In response to one of the action plans approved by the Board of Education as part of its Goals, the Board asked the Administration to benchmark ourselves against the best school systems in a number of elementary and secondary areas. Cynthia Gilchrest, Director of Elementary Education will headline a presentation to the Board of Education at our meeting scheduled for Monday, December 17. Cyndy will be joined by all of our elementary principals and assistant principals and other members of the elementary leadership team who will be presenting, A Profile of the Westport Public Schools Elementary Program: A Benchmark Assessment.

The presentation will focus on the following points:

1. The reasons for benchmarking at this time
2. Data gathering
3. DRG Data on class size and full-day Kindergarten
4. Analysis of best practices in elementary schools
5. An analysis and review of current practice in Westport's elementary schools
6. An analysis and review of current practice in DRG A elementary schools
7. Time dedicated to language arts and special area subjects in DRG A elementary schools
8. The integration of technology into elementary instructional time
9. Proposed modifications to Kindergarten and Grade 5 schedules

During that same meeting, Lis Comm, Director of Secondary Education will be joined by our two middle school principals and our Department Chair for Science, 6-12, to address a proposed middle school elective that benchmarking has demonstrated is being offered in some of the finest school systems in the country.

Additionally, I have had research performed with regard to historic class size trends in Westport, indicating what the impact might be were we to change our class guidelines at the elementary level, in particular.

You will find appended to this memorandum two others, one from Lis Comm to me that provides background material for a middle school design and engineering course and another from me to the Board discussing class size history and the financial implications of change.



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ELLIOTT LANDON
Superintendent of Schools

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To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Elliott Landon

Subject: Class Size History

Date: December 17, 2012

The members of the Board of Education, as part of our Goals and Objectives for the 2012-13 school year, requested an analysis of class size history in the Westport Public Schools.

At my request, Nancy Harris has created a spreadsheet that compares class size enrollments in second grade for the 10 year period from 2003-2012 using a maximum class size guideline of 25 students per class v. 22 students per class, making use of present breakpoints. The effect of such a change in guidelines would create a maximum class size guideline of 22 for all classroom sections in Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2.

As you can see from the analysis, were we to change our maximum class size guidelines at the second grade level to 22 from the current 25, with retention of the current breakpoints, on average we could expect to add 2 full-time teachers to our budget, at a projected cost of \$140,000 to include benefits. Additionally, at a cost of \$70,800 we would be required to add 0.8 special area teachers and 0.4 paraprofessionals.

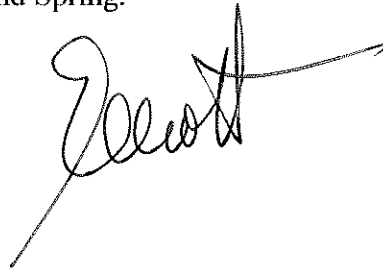
Based on projected enrollments, were we to implement a reduction in the maximum class size guidelines for grades 3-5 in the 2013-14 school year, similar to the reduction shown for grade 2 and retaining the current breakpoints, the impact would require us to add 5 full-time teachers in grades 3-5: 1 at grade 3; 1 at grade 4; and, 3 at grade 5. The total estimated cost of this increase in staff, with benefits would be \$350,000. Additionally, we would be required to add 2.0 special area teachers at a combined cost of \$140,000 and 0.2 paraprofessional for the third grade class at a cost of \$7,400.

Thus, for the upcoming 2013-14 school year, any reductions to current elementary school maximum class sizes from 25 to 22 in grades 2-5, would require us to add 7 teachers, 2.8 special area teachers, and 0.6 paraprofessional to our 2013-14 proposed operating budget at an average net cost of salaries and benefits of \$708,200.

Such a change in maximum class size guidelines also would impact our space needs, requiring us to modify the interiors of certain of our schools to accommodate the increase in classes, where possible; place students in sub-standard spaces for instruction; or, re-district in an attempt to balance enrollments in a concerted effort to equitably re-distribute students throughout our schools.

The issue of class sizes is not applicable to the middle schools, where our teaming structure continues to be able to accommodate groups of 80-110 students. For Staples, with approximately 1,900 students expected in the next school year in a building constructed for only 1,800, without any change in class size guidelines, space limitations prohibit us from reducing our class size guidelines below their current maxima.

I have included for your review a listing of current class sizes at Staples for full year and all semester courses, both Fall and Spring.

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WESTPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
 ANALYSIS OF ENROLLMENT AND CLASS SIZE ON OCTOBER 1
 10 YEAR COMPARISON FOR SECOND GRADE

BREAKPOINT YEAR	CES		GFS		KHS		LLS		SES		TOTAL		DIFFERENCE
	25	22	25	22	25	22	25	22	25	22	25	22	
2012	75		75		73		107		91		421		
SECTIONS	4	4	4	4	3	4	5	5	4	5	20	22	2
AVE CLASS SIZE	18.75	18.75	18.75	18.75	24.33	18.25	21.40	21.40	22.75	18.20	21.05	19.14	(1.91)
2011	82		70		86		101		84		423		
SECTIONS	4	4	3	4	4	4	5	5	4	4	20	21	1
AVE CLASS SIZE	20.50	20.50	23.33	17.50	21.50	21.50	20.20	20.20	21.00	21.00	21.15	20.14	(1.01)
2010	84		75		88		99		95		441		
SECTIONS	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	5	21	23	2
AVE CLASS SIZE	21.00	21.00	18.75	18.75	22.00	17.60	19.80	19.80	23.75	19.00	21.00	19.17	(1.83)
2009	66		79		80		88		93		406		
SECTIONS	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	5	19	22	3
AVE CLASS SIZE	22.00	16.50	19.75	19.75	20.00	20.00	22.00	17.60	23.25	18.60	21.37	18.45	(2.91)
2008	95		77		75		110		73		430		
SECTIONS	4	5	4	4	4	4	5	5	3	4	20	22	2
AVE CLASS SIZE	23.75	19.00	19.25	19.25	18.75	18.75	22.00	22.00	24.33	18.25	21.50	19.55	(1.95)
2007	75		85		99		101		101		461		
SECTIONS	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	23	23	-
AVE CLASS SIZE	18.75	18.75	21.25	21.25	19.80	19.80	20.20	20.20	20.20	20.20	20.04	20.04	-
2006	73		85		76		98		83		415		
SECTIONS	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	4	20	21	1
AVE CLASS SIZE	24.33	18.25	21.25	21.25	19.00	19.00	19.60	19.60	20.75	20.75	20.75	19.76	(0.99)
2005	68		69		94		105		71		407		
SECTIONS	3	4	3	4	4	5	5	5	3	4	18	22	4
AVE CLASS SIZE	22.67	17.00	23.00	17.25	23.50	18.80	21.00	21.00	23.67	17.75	22.61	18.50	(4.11)
2004	82		88		75		87		98		430		
SECTIONS	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	21	23	2
AVE CLASS SIZE	20.50	20.50	22.00	17.60	18.75	18.75	21.75	17.40	19.60	19.60	20.48	18.70	(1.78)
2003	74		89		68		121		87		439		
SECTIONS	4	4	4	5	3	4	6	6	4	5	21	24	3
AVE CLASS SIZE	18.50	18.50	22.25	17.80	22.67	17.00	20.17	20.17	21.75	17.40	20.90	18.29	(2.61)

WESTPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
NESDEC PROJECTED ENROLLMENT for OCTOBER 1, 2013
PROJECTED CLASS SIZE MODEL

School	Grade										K-12 PROJ 13-14	ACTUAL 12-13	BUD TO PROJ				
	PRE K	MAX 22 K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8				9	10	11	12
Coleytown El	46	61	63	62	77	85	89								437	446	DIF
# sections	3	3	3	4	4	4	4								21	22	(9)
estimated class size	20.33	21.00	20.67	19.25	21.25	22.25									20.81		(1)
Green's Farms		63	67	79	75	79	77								440	452	(12)
# sections		3	4	4	4	4	4								23	23	-
estimated class size		21.00	16.75	19.75	18.75	19.75	19.25								19.13		-
Kings Highway		70	76	78	75	87	91								477	486	(9)
# sections		4	4	4	4	4	4								24	24	-
estimated class size		17.50	19.00	19.50	18.75	21.75	22.75								19.88		-
Long Lots		87	87	96	109	107	99								585	583	2
# sections		5	5	4	5	5	5								29	29	-
estimated class size		17.40	17.40	24.00	21.80	21.40	19.80								20.17		-
Saugatuck		84	93	83	93	85	96								534	524	10
# sections		4	5	4	4	4	4								25	25	-
estimated class size		21.00	18.60	20.75	23.25	21.25	24.00								21.36		-
Pre-K-5 Total	46	365	386	398	429	443	452								2,473	2,491	(18)
# sections		19	21	19	21	21	21								122	123	(1)
estimated class size		19.21	18.38	20.95	20.43	21.10	21.52								20.27		-
Bedford Middle						276	297	290							863	868	(5)
Coleytown Middle						173	181	177							531	512	19
6-8 Budget Total						449	478	467							1,394	1,380	14
Staples High School									461	479	470	464			1,874	1,861	13
Total K-12															5,741	5,732	9
Pre-K															46	45	1
Placed Out (K-12)															26	26	-
Grand Total Students:															5,813	5,803	10

*Source: NESDEC 12-3-2012



Lisabeth Comm
Director, Secondary Education
Telephone: 203-341-1009
Email: lcomm@westport.k12.ct.us

To: Elliott Landon

From: Lisabeth Comm

Date: December 12, 2012

Re: Background Material for Proposed Middle School Design and Engineering Course

The proposal for a middle school Design and Engineering Course comes in direct response to one of the goals adopted by the Board of Education for 2012-13. Under Student Achievement, the Board has directed that Westport educators “expand efforts to appropriately challenge all students in the core curriculum areas at all middle school grade levels, to include the development of middle school enrichment programs that focus on engineering, design, and humanities....”

For the past several years, middle school teachers and administrators have been examining curriculum, assessment and instruction to determine if our students are being prepared to become leaders in the 21st century. To that end, we formed the Middle School Challenge and Enrichment Committee in December of 2011. That committee, composed of middle school teachers and administrators, and chaired by James D’Amico, was charged with exploring ways our two middle schools could provide students with greater opportunities for challenge and enrichment in order to meet the needs of those who are particularly able or interested in topics not currently covered in the curriculum. Committee work included taking an inventory of academic enrichment activities currently taking place; surveys of current middle school students as well as tenth graders reflecting back on their middle school experience; analysis of current use of time; research on best practices, and scheduling models for providing appropriate academic challenges in the middle school; surveys of our Tri-State counterparts; site visits to schools including North Salem, New York; Mansfield, CT; Weston, CT.

The results of student surveys included the two following cogent pieces of data:

- Students across grades 6, 7, 8 (81.86%) and grade 10 (82.87%) overwhelmingly said that they are/would have been interested in a program that provided a choice of topics to investigate based on personal interests.
- When given a choice of topics they’d like to explore further, Engineering/Architecture came out on the top of the list at every middle school grade level, followed by the arts.

Based on research into best practice and survey results from our own middle school and tenth grade students, the Middle School Challenge Committee concluded that “district and building administrators develop opportunities for students to take part in decision making about programs that will become available to students.”

Therefore, we propose that eighth grade students have the opportunity to choose, not only from our existing list of electives, but also from an additional elective, a design and engineering course, which would meet three times per week. Because we highly value the arts, all middle school students would continue to have the choice among all of our other electives (drama, music, art, and computer) as well as the newly proposed design and engineering course.

The proposed design and engineering course, besides being of interest to students, provides opportunities for students to develop 21st century skills, as indicated in the following proposal, as well as opportunities to engage in the types of critical thinking called for by the Common Core Standards.

Westport Public Schools
STEM Elective (Encore)* Proposal
Grade 8 Design and Engineering
December 17, 2012

- Elective Title: Middle School Design and Engineering
- Elective Meeting Times: 3 days per week, full year
- Areas of Study: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)

RATIONALE

1. *How does this course contribute to district goals and objectives?*

As part of our collective effort to expand opportunities to challenge all students in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), grades 6-12, we are proposing the development of a middle school elective program that enriches our curriculum by focusing on design and engineering.

2. *What is the need this course addresses?*

The National Science Standards include engineering standards for all grades, K-12. This course will begin to address these standards and build capacity at both of our middle schools.

3. *How does this course support the recommendation of the latest K-12 review?*

While the K-12 review process is ongoing and does not currently specify an engineering course at the middle level, this process does recommend increased STEM opportunities at the middle level, consistent with the recommendations that are supported by multiple national science organizations, all of which call for implementation of engineering education, K-12.

4. *How does this course align with the goals of Westport 2025?*

This course addresses the “Critical Thinking”, “Creative Thinking”, and “Communication” domains. This course will allow students opportunities to engage in each of the four capacities which reside within the “Critical Thinking” domain (Interpreting, Analyzing, Making Applications and Evaluating). Additionally, students will be asked to develop creative solutions to design and engineering challenges. Since students will work in ‘design teams’ and present results of their problem-solving efforts, working within the communication domain will be critical for success in this course. Ultimately, the overarching intent of this course is for students to, “think like an engineer” as they work in teams to solve design and engineering problems.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Design and Engineering elective course will allow students to engage in 21st Century skills and capacities, such as real world problem solving, through a process that simulates what engineers do. One of the key learning outcomes is that students realize the iterative nature of problem solving, where they generate an idea, prototype it, analyze the prototype and redesign multiple times until the best solution is found. The course is designed to help students see how this iterative process is similar to the revision process that is part of writing. Additionally, the course is designed to create a learning environment in which students can wrestle with complex problems at appropriate challenge levels for middle school students. The close relationship between design and engineering allows students to see the connections between art and the ‘built’ world. The design and engineering class provides an additional safe place for middle school students to work in teams, to communicate solutions, to take intellectual risks, and to develop resilience through the process of discovery.

COURSE CONTENT

- Instruction on engineering and design processes: concept development, creation of prototypes, failure analysis, evaluation, presentation and communication.
- Instruction on the approaches and methodologies engineers use to solve problems.
- Instruction on types of engineering analysis.

EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Skills:
 - Students will be able to work in small groups to collaboratively develop design concepts
 - Students will be able to evaluate criteria and constraints within a design challenge and persist in their design evaluation
 - Students will be able to generate prototypes of design concepts
 - Students will be able to re-design and improve existing models
 - Students will be able to critically evaluate new concepts about the function of systems and their various components
 - Students will be able to combine existing solutions together to generate novel or new solutions to additional problems
- Knowledge:
 - Students will gain an understanding of the design process
 - Students will gain an understanding of the iterative nature of design
 - Students will gain an understanding of the various areas of engineering
 - Students will gain insights into the career opportunities available in the fields of engineering
- Assessment:
 - Students will be evaluated on the processes and activities used to address challenges and solve problems. Assessments will focus on the success of design solutions and the process students engage in reaching and communicating solutions.
 - Students will maintain records pertaining to the design process (ex. design journals) and outcomes relating to prototype designs, trials, failure analyses, etc. These journals may be the primary mechanism of student assessment and evaluation.

Equipment/Materials/Texts: Approximately \$20,000

*Encore electives include: Computer, Music, Art, and Drama Presentation

WESTPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ELLIOTT LANDON
Superintendent of Schools

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WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT 06880
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To: Board of Education
From: Elliott Landon
Subject: School Calendar Guidelines: 2014-15
Date: December 17, 2012

The Board previously has approved calendars for the 2012-13 and 2013-14 school years, with the latter having been approved in December 2011 and modified as a result of the school closings associated with Hurricane Sandy. It has been the Board's practice to have on file approved calendars for two upcoming school years by the end of November/beginning of December in any school year. Thus, at our meeting of December 3, I will be presenting for your consideration and approval a calendar for the 2014-15 school year.

Traditionally, we have sought input from representatives of the Westport Education Association and the Intermediate Administrators' Association prior to presenting a proposed calendar to the Board for its consideration. Before participating in those discussions, we have each year sought guidance from the Board as to its priorities with regard to the construct of the school calendar.

Over the past several years, the Board has agreed that: (1) our schools should not be closed on Veteran's Day, recognizing that the day has greater meaning for students when schools are in session and activities related to Veteran's Day are presented to them within their individual school environments; and, (2) the last day of school each year, always shortened for students, is more productive for end-of-year "wrap-up activities" when it remains at full length for teachers and support staff. The Board also has acknowledged the contractual requirement that single day holidays and extended vacations for teachers shall be the same as for students, except as negotiated with the Association.

As we prepare to discuss the 2014-15 school calendar, and based upon our weather-related experiences of this school year and the previous one, I propose that the Board give consideration to accepting the following additional *permanent* guidelines to assist the Administration in developing school calendar recommendations to the Board of Education:

1. The first day of school for students shall be prior to Labor Day.
2. Where possible, Columbus Day is to be a regular school day for teachers and students.
3. Both a February and April recess for students and teachers shall be retained.
4. Where weather-related or emergency conditions make a 182 day school year for students impossible to achieve, make-up days shall begin with the first day of the April recess and continue to progress to each day thereafter, until no longer needed.

I will send to you via Email on Monday, December 17, a number of school calendars for the 2014-15 school year to enable you to make a more informed decision as you consider adopting guidelines, as follows:

1. Current model, with the guidelines outlined above.
2. Post-Labor Day start for students; schools closed on Columbus Day; February and April recesses
3. Post-Labor Day start for students; schools open on Columbus Day; February and April recesses
4. Post-Labor Day start for students: schools closed on Columbus Day; no February or April recesses; four day weekends abutting President's Day and Good Friday.
5. Post-Labor Day start for students; schools closed on Columbus Day; no April recess; four day weekend abutting Good Friday
6. Pre-Labor Day start for students; schools closed on Columbus Day; February and April recesses
7. Pre-Labor Day start for students; schools open on Columbus Day; February and April recesses
8. Pre-Labor Day start for students: schools closed on Columbus Day; no February or April recesses; four day weekends abutting President's Day and Good Friday.
9. Pre-Labor Day start for students; schools closed on Columbus Day; no April recess; four day weekend abutting Good Friday

The establishment of permanent guidelines by the Board in anticipation of the preparation of the 2014-15 school calendar will be for discussion purposes only at our meeting of December 17, with the establishment of a 2014-15 school calendar to be approved at one of our January meetings.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Scott", is located in the lower right quadrant of the page. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.