

June 3, 2013

Staples High School

## WESTPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION

### \*AGENDA

(Agenda Subject to Modification in Accordance with Law)

**7:00 p.m. PUBLIC CALL TO ORDER:** Staples High School, Principal's Conference Room, 1025C

**ANTICIPATED EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Strategies for Negotiations

**RESUME PUBLIC SESSION**

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

**ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM BOARD AND ADMINISTRATION**

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

**MINUTES:** May 20, 2013

**PRESENTATION:**

1. From **BLACKBOARD** to **SCHOOLGY** (30 mins.) (Encl.) Ms. Carrigan

**DISCUSSION:**

1. School System Goals: July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014 (60 mins.) (Encl.) Dr. Landon

**DISCUSSION/ACTION:**

1. Acceptance of Gifts (10 mins.) (Encl.) Dr. Landon

2. Non-Union Personnel Compensation: 2013-14 School Year (10 mins.) Dr. Landon

**RESUME EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Performance Evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools

**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](http://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

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**ELLIOTT LANDON**  
*Superintendent of Schools*

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To: Members of the Board of Education

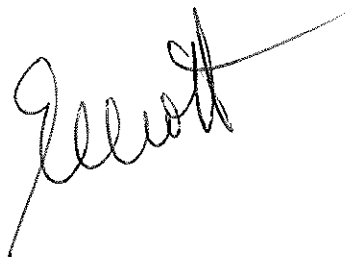
From: Elliott Landon

Subject: From **BLACKBOARD** to **SCHOLOGY**

Date: June 3, 2013

Natalie Carrigan, our Director of Technology, will present to the Board at our meeting of June 3. Her presentation will focus on the advantages and benefits of the migration from Blackboard to Schoology, a “cloud-based, safe and secure social networking service and virtual learning environment.”

I have included for your review an attachment on this subject in preparation for our meeting of June 3.



# Westport Public Schools Will Move to Schoology [skool-uh-jee]

**Schoology** allows teachers to share assignments and digital materials with students and is essentially a cloud-based safe and secure social networking service and virtual learning environment. It will support blended learning and/or flipped classrooms where appropriate.

## Why Schoology?

Since 2008 teachers have used Blackboard as a means to share documents, files, resources, and assignments with students and parents. While Blackboard was the best tool at the time of purchase, teachers, students, and parents found it very cumbersome to use.

For the past two and half years, our Information Technology (IT) Department has worked with small groups of teachers to review alternative programs to Blackboard. In total, they evaluated fifteen different products and compared the features and functions available to students, teachers, administrators, parents, and technical staff. If a product looked promising, focus groups and pilots were conducted to gather additional feedback. In order for a product to make it to that wider audience at a minimum it had to meet the following criteria:

- allow equivalent functionality currently available in Blackboard
- efficient yet simple user interface
- provide separate user accounts for students and parents
- provide a parent view that provides access to a majority of the student content
- be able to auto-update course enrollments and user data daily
- include a user friendly calendar

## Reaction to Schoology

During the 2012-2013 school year teachers, students, and parents from grades kindergarten to high school piloted Schoology. Everyone involved found that the program was easy to use, met virtually all of our needs), and provided enough improvement in form and function that it was worth the effort to change.

Comments from those who were involved in the pilot program and the focus groups appear below:

I find Schoology to be very easy to use because of its 'Facebook' like interface. All important current information is posted in one location much like a Facebook newsfeed. No more searching through different school or PTA websites to find out what is going on at my kids' schools - everything I want to know about it is on one page. Also, the ability to receive notifications or updates on my phone through the Schoology app is huge!

-Renee Sivinki, Parent

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I found Schoology very teacher friendly! I love it! I was able to upload files, pictures, and videos easily. Parents who have multiple children in the district were very excited to hear that they will be able to view all their children in one spot. They found it very time consuming to navigate through Blackboard to search for all the different classes. My colleagues are eager to use it next year!

-Annie Roesler, Kindergarten Teacher

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I used Blackboard as a place to display information. It often felt cumbersome and never felt interactive. With Schoology, I am able to create discussion boards, online reading logs, as well as tests and quizzes with ease. Sharing those items with students is simple, even if I only want to share it with a few of them. More importantly though, I can provide feedback to the students that they will always have access to. My feedback comes in the form of a grade and or a comment, which is very helpful on the elementary level. The work they complete on Schoology is sorted and accessible for the entire year. Not only can I see the progress students have made, so can their parents and the students themselves. The simplicity and interactivity of Schoology is what makes it such a wonderful and versatile tool. Students took to it quickly and parents have enjoyed being able to see their children's graded work on a regular basis. I am looking forward to starting off next year with Schoology!

- Eric Lawrence, Grade 5 Teacher

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Due to Schoology's overall ease of use and intuitive interface, I have been inspired to "flip" my classroom on numerous occasions. Schoology makes it easy to post video of lessons that students can access through the "upcoming" assignments list or the calendar. In addition it provides me with the ability to create online assessments that give me feedback on whether students understood the notes and what I may need to address the next day in class. I am able to use class time for students to apply what they've learned to problem sets, instead of taking notes, while I monitor the accuracy and proficiency at which they apply their new-found skills.

- Kevin Cuccaro, Grade 8 Math Teacher

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Schoology has a very user-friendly, familiar interface. I can easily post updates with interesting links, photos and videos as well as link and upload documents that students can access and use. The calendar feature that compiles a students' assignments and due dates all into one space helps with time management (a developing skill for middle schoolers!). Having the ability to communicate with other Schoology educators across the country through groups has also inspired some new teaching ideas for my classroom. I'm looking forward to using it more in the future!

- Colleen Rondon, Grade 8 Science Teacher

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Schoology vs. Blackboard? There's no contest; Schoology is SO MUCH easier to use! In all the years I have used Blackboard I only uploaded a handful of files; within a month of using Schoology I had created folders for each unit and uploaded hundreds of files! Users of Facebook will find the interface familiar, but familiarity with Facebook is NOT necessary to excel with the software. Whereas Blackboard required you to upload materials one class at a time, Schoology allows you to post to *multiple classes at once!* Schoology allows you to post one assignment to multiple classes, and adjust the due dates accordingly! You can also set Schoology to automatically export the due dates to a Google Calendar which you can share with your students, giving them more than one way to get to their homework! Needless to say, I have been posting ALL of my homework on Schoology since September! Another great thing about Schoology is that there is a free Schoology app that students and teachers can download. While students are working on a complicated project that requires multiple resources, I have students taking out their smartphones and laptops and opening the files that I have posted on Schoology; the ease of access, for both teachers and students, is astonishing!

- Michael Lazaroff, Staples science teacher

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## Using Schoology

We will officially begin using Schoology on the first day of school for the 2013-2014 school year. Teachers will be required to post the same type of information as they did with Blackboard.

We have setup our own instance of Schoology utilizing "Single Sign On". This means that users can log in with their existing Westport username and password. You can go directly to the "log in page" by going to <http://schoology.westport.k12.ct.us>.

# WESTPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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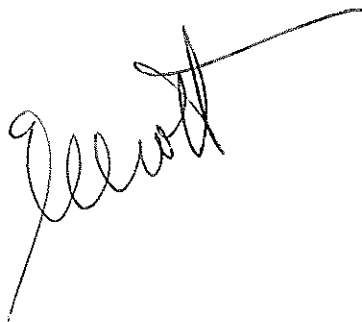
**ELLIOTT LANDON**  
*Superintendent of Schools*

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To: Members of the Board of Education  
From: Elliott Landon  
Subject: School System Goals / July 1, 2013-June 30, 2014  
Date: June 3, 2013

Having begun the process of addressing the matter of our school system's priorities, goals and action plans for the 2013-14 school year at previous Board of Education meetings, and having incorporated virtually all of the Board's suggestions for inclusion in the document appended to this memorandum, subject to Board of Education modification and approval this document will guide our school system instructional and administrative activities throughout the upcoming 2013-14 school year.

Since this item is listed on our agenda for the meeting of June 3 as a "discussion" item, there is no administrative recommendation to accompany the proposed Goals and Action Plans. Should the Board agree upon this proposed document at the meeting of June 3, or make final modifications, we will place this item on the agenda of the meeting of June 17 for Board of Education approval.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Elliott Landon", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**APPROVED BOE GOALS 2012-13**

**SEPTEMBER 10, 2012**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLANS:**  
**2012-13**

**I. STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

**GOAL: Continuous Improvement in Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment**

**Action Plans**

- In November, February, and May report to the Board of Education on: Westport Education 2025, to include progress on determining how to assess whether our goals and evaluative measures for this project are appropriate ; our involvement with high performing school systems in the Tri-State Consortium and with Teachers College researchers; and, our use of research-based measures to benchmark ourselves against the best school systems nationally and internationally with regard to curriculum, programs and assessments, to include pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and grades 1-12.
- Review: (1) historic class size trends in Westport; (2) data concerning class sizes and class size breakpoints and guidelines, K-12; (3) the appropriateness of current class size guidelines in view of the 2025 strategy; and, (4) the effect upon class sizes of the enhancement of Staples graduation requirements with a focus on: (a) the types of courses and numbers of credits required for graduation, to include current courses and new and revised courses; (b) the length and placement of courses at various grade levels; (c) the numbers of credits required in the various academic departments.
- At the elementary and middle school levels, review Singapore Math, science inquiry, and social studies programs; 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; and, prepare an implementation schedule and an assessment report concerning the effects of the 2012-13 modifications and enhancements to the Program for the Gifted.
- Address issues related to school climate and “mean spirited” behavior on the part of students and adults through the Westport School Climate Initiative to include a presentation by Joanne Frieberg, School Climate Consultant to the Connecticut State Department of Education and Member, National School Climate Council.
- Research the possibility of expanding our grant writing program to include identifying successful efforts of school districts similar to Westport with curriculum projects as innovative as Westport Education 2025.
- Explore the cost of conducting a survey of Staples graduates from the classes of 2007 and 2012 and the feasibility of including it in 2013-14 budget proposals.
- Review staffing levels for all special area offerings and alternative methods of scheduling for both special areas and core academic subjects to maximize student instructional time in the core academic areas, K-12. (December 2013)

## II. FACILITIES

**GOAL: Provide appropriate space for all students and administrators and support services in safe, secure buildings that are maintained in exemplary fashion**

## III. FISCAL MANAGEMENT

**GOAL: Manage the schools in an efficient and cost effective manner, while maintaining and improving the quality of educational programs**

## IV. BOARD OF EDUCATION EFFECTIVENESS

**GOAL: Maintain appropriate Board policies aligned with educational goals and sound educational practices.**

### Action Plans

**Objective 1. Ensure that Board of Education goals and related action plans are producing desired effects.**

- Align Board of Education goals and related action plans to the BOE/Superintendent's jointly-developed Superintendent's performance objectives and review outcomes in December, March and June.
- Provide opportunities for the Board of Education to engage in self-evaluation. (December 2012)
- Develop schedules of formal visitations by Board of Education members to each of the school system's schools. (December 2012)

**Objective 2. Examine the annual school calendar approval process for the purpose of structuring a standardized formula to guide its development.**

- Establish a fixed policy to guide the creation of the school calendar on an annual basis. (December 2012)



V. HUMAN RESOURCES

**GOAL: Staff the school system with highest quality teachers, administrators and staff.**

**Objective 1. Maintain the highest quality of staff in all employment categories.**

**Action Plans**

- Review the Professional Development and Evaluation Plan (PDEP) document to assess where it is and is not consistent with: (1) the 2012 education reform legislation as incorporated into the Connecticut General Statutes; (2) the associated Core Requirements for educator evaluation and support systems adopted as Regulations of the State Board of Education in June 2012; and, (3) the corresponding State Model for educator evaluation and support issued by the State Department of Education in August 2012.
- Present to the Board any 2013-14 budget implications regarding the extent to which Westport Public Schools should adopt the State Model and, if any deviations are recommended, propose specific alternative approaches to ensure that only the highest quality staff is being retained and the evaluative procedures, performance indicators, standards and procedures and instructional practices are equipping all students with globally competitive 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.
- Develop a corresponding plan for submission to the Commissioner of Education for approval of any components of the new system, if any, where Westport Public Schools seek to deviate from the State Model.
- Provide leadership training for all administrators to achieve consistent practice in implementing the revised educator evaluation and support system during teacher evaluations.

# **PROPOSED BOE GOALS 2013-14**

**June 3, 2013**

# **BOARD OF EDUCATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLANS: 2013-14**

## **1. STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

### **GOAL: Continuous Improvement in Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment**

#### **Action Plans**

- In November 2013, and February and May 2014, report to the Board of Education on Westport Education 2025, to include:
  - › our involvement with high performing school systems in the Tri-State Consortium and with Teachers College researchers
  - › benchmarking ourselves against the best school systems nationally and internationally from the perspective of Kindergarten-Grade 12 with regard to curriculum, programs and assessments.
  - › progress towards developing assessments to rigorously measure student success in mastering skills of critical and creative thinking, global citizenship and entrepreneurship in an interdisciplinary environment, incorporating the requirements of the Common Core State Standards.
  - › updates on the progress of the 21<sup>st</sup> century collaborative research project involving the Hwa Chong Institution, Singapore; Westport Public Schools; and Teachers College, Columbia University initiative financed by the National Institute of Education, Singapore.
- Review and report upon in November 2013:
  - › impact of modification of class size breakpoints, K – 5; team class sizes at the middle school level, grades 6-8; and, class size minima and maxima at Staples, grades 9-12
  - › efforts to increase the numbers of instructional minutes provided to students daily, weekly and annually, to include a reexamination of time allocations for all specials offerings.
  - › short- and long-term impact of increased/decreased enrollments from the perspectives of space utilization, class size guidelines, and the possible need for re-districting/re-structuring.
  - › alternative programmatic and scheduling alternatives at the middle school level to provide for enrichment opportunities in the core academic subjects; STEM three times per week; and, expanded opportunities for differentiation in preparation for leveled coursework at Staples, said review to include a comprehensive review of all elective offerings.
  - › optimal start and end times for elementary and middle schools, and Staples High School based upon appropriate research, common practice and impact upon before and after school extracurricular and student work activities.
  - › alternative organizational models for maintaining within a limited time range the starting and ending times of all elementary schools.
- Report in September 2013 on the findings of the Tri-State Consortium consultancy concerning the Program for the Gifted and the recommended schedule for implementation of the recommendations during the 2013-14 and the 2014-15 school years.

- Examine and report in November 2013 upon the elementary and middle schools and Staples High School from an academic and mental health perspective with respect to current services.
  - › Prepare recommendations to strengthen and expand/modify graduation requirements for students entering Staples High School, if deemed necessary, to include an examination of potential alternatives to, or the elimination of, Advanced Placement courses.
  - › Report on the extent and reasons for tutoring of students at the middle and high school levels and the impact of tutoring upon students, teachers, courses and programs
  - › Examine and report upon options for course selection and sequencing for students at Staples.
- Develop both short- and long-term plans, based on reports and recommendations from the District's School Climate Committee, to include recommendations to strengthen integrity and ethical behavior on the part of students in their use of technology.
- In May, 2014 report upon implementation of Five Day/Full Day Kindergarten.

## **II. FACILITIES, FOOD AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

**GOAL: Provide appropriate space for all students and administrators and support services in safe, secure buildings that are maintained in exemplary fashion**

### **Action Plans**

- Develop by June 2014 for issuance in December 2014 specifications and an RFP for contracted school transportation services to replace the school transportation contract that will expire on June 30, 2015 so that it reflects placement of bus storage and maintenance facilities, continuance of mandated background checks for drivers, and a Union contract whose preferred starting and ending dates are July 1 and June 30, respectively.
- Prepare by November 5, 2013 a proposal for school transportation services that reflects parity between and among schools in terms of start and dismissal times at the elementary level, to include budgetary implications for the 2014/2015 school year.
- Report on both short- and long term visions for maintaining, sustaining and enhancing the school food services program, K-12, no later than November 2013.
  - › Issue in December 2013 an RFP for contracted school food services to replace the food services contract that will expire on June 30, 2014.
- Develop and implement with the assistance of Kroll Advisory Services both short- and long-term plans for optimizing school security in all schools, K-12.

**III. FISCAL MANAGEMENT**

**GOAL: Manage the schools in an efficient and cost effective manner, while maintaining and improving the quality of educational programs**

- Develop a written calendar and schedule for 2014-15 school budget preparation that reflects an October 2013 pre-budget discussion of the Board and the Administration to define budgetary goals and priorities; a January-February 2014 budget discussion and approval schedule; and a late May 2014 assessment of budgetary goals and priorities.

**IV. BOARD OF EDUCATION EFFECTIVENESS**

**GOAL: Maintain appropriate Board policies aligned with educational goals and sound educational practices.**

**Action Plans**

**Objective 1. Ensure that Board of Education goals and related action plans are producing desired effects.**

- Align Board of Education goals and related action plans to the BOE/Superintendent's jointly-developed Superintendent's performance objectives and review outcomes in December 2013 and March and June 2014.
- Provide opportunities for the Board of Education to engage in self-evaluation (December 2013).
- Develop schedules of formal visitations by Board of Education members to each of the school system's schools. (December 2013).

**Objective 2. Prepare a prospective annual school agenda framework to guide the deliberations of the Board from August 2013 – June 2014,**

V. **HUMAN RESOURCES**

**GOAL: Staff the school system with highest quality teachers, administrators and staff.**

**Objective 1. Maintain the highest quality of staff in all employment categories.**

**Action Plans**

- Implement the Teacher and Administrator Supervision and Evaluation requirements adopted as Regulations by the State Board of Education for implementation in the 2013-14 school year.
- Continue to provide leadership training for all administrators to achieve consistent practice in implementing the revised educator evaluation and support system during teacher evaluations.
- Examine the feasibility of including in that component of the State-approved Westport Teacher and Administrator Supervision and Evaluation Plan a provision for parent and student feedback related to teacher performance, consistent with statutory requirements.

# WESTPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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*Superintendent of Schools*

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TELEPHONE: (203) 341-1025  
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To: Members of the Board of Education  
From: Elliott Landon  
Subject: Acceptance of Gifts  
Date: May 20, 2013

I am pleased to inform you that the Board of Education has been offered a most generous gift of \$7,846 from the King's Highway School PTA for the purchase and installation of new window treatments for the King's Highway School auditorium. The new window treatments will allow both students and teachers to make better use of the auditorium by enabling light to be adjusted as necessary for any activity or event taking place in the auditorium.

Another very generous gift is being offered to us by the Bedford Middle School PTA in the amount of \$8461. Comprised of multiple components, the BMS gift is for the purchase of a MakerBot 3D printer (Model Replicator 2X), spools and service plan, with a total value of \$3601; and, a replacement lighting console for the one in disrepair in the BMS auditorium (Model Element 60 250 Channel Lighting Console) that is valued at \$4860.

I recommend acceptance of these thoughtful gifts from the KHS PTA and the BMS PTA.

## ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION

**Be It Resolved, That upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts with gratitude and appreciation from the King's Highway School PTA a gift in the amount of \$7,846 for the purchase and installation of new window treatments for the King's Highway School auditorium and a gift valued at \$8461 from the Bedford Middle School PTA for the purchase of a MakerBot 3D Printer and a replacement for the lighting console in the Bedford Middle School auditorium.**

