

March 1, 2021

A regular meeting of the Westfield School Committee was held on Monday, March 1, 2021, at 7:00 pm remotely (due to COVID-19 crisis). Members present by roll call were: Ramon Diaz, Diane Mayhew, Bo Sullivan, Cindy Sullivan, Tim O'Connor, and Chairman Humason. At 7:08 pm Heather Sullivan entered the meeting.

At 7:07 pm Chairman Humason called the meeting to order.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Public participation, excluding personnel:

Chairman Humason reported that the School Committee email account will be deactivated on March 2, 2021. Public participation can be addressed by joining the zoom meeting. The zoom meeting information is listed on the agenda.

Diane Mayhew read the following emails:

Chrissy Colbath, Blueberry Ridge, Westfield, MA

Fort Meadow is a unique school serving the needs of children with and without disabilities in a warm and friendly space. My daughter who is currently in 4th grade, attended there as a peer role model. While there, she was under the loving care of a dedicated staff, led by her classroom teacher of two years, Mrs. Bruno. With the gentle guidance of her teachers she overcame some intense shyness. She thrived there surrounded by same age peers. She was part of a community designed for learners of her size and developmental level. Fort Meadow students are thriving, even during this pandemic. The preschool teachers are able to collaborate and create unique preschool level learning experiences. They draw upon each other's creativity and with this collaborative spirit were able to do things like creating a school wide dramatic play farmers market, and a science day filled with catapulting pumpkins. Fort Meadow students learn so much from each other in these robust play based collaborative experiences. This is the first school home for many of your students with disabilities. I urge you to keep Fort Meadow preschool for future students to learn, play and thrive. Thank you!

Denise & Patrick Corrigan, Bailey Drive, Westfield, MA

We were devastated when we heard the news that Fort Meadow Early Childhood Learning Center might be closing its doors. Fort Meadow is truly a gift to the Westfield community and it would be detrimental to the future of many children if it was to close. Our son Jack has a neurologic condition, global developmental delay and is non-verbal. He transitioned to Fort Meadow when he turned 3 in May of 2019 after receiving intensive home based services from Early Intervention. Because of Jack's multiple needs, we were very nervous and anxious to send Jack to a public pre-school environment after having fantastic in-home Speech, OT, PT, & and other services from EI. Our fears were quickly put to rest and to say Jack has thrived at Fort Meadow is an understatement. He has truly found his second home and the teachers, paras, and staff have truly become his second family. There is just something truly magical about the environment at Fort Meadow that would be lost if pre-school were incorporated into the elementary schools. There is something so pure about young children getting to start their life-long learning journey in an environment that is truly focused on developing social-emotional skills. The

integrated, language based classrooms filled with children of all learning abilities has been such a gift for Jack. He truly loves being surrounded by his peers all day in a classroom where he is accepted for who he is and where he is at. We worry about the years ahead when we know it will not be possible for him to have as much inclusion as he has now, but what a wonderful way for him to have been introduced to formal education in such a warm, loving environment. There have been many kids like Jack who have gone to Fort Meadow before him and many that will come after. Please don't deprive them of the opportunity to experience pre-school at Fort Meadow. I am sure there will be lots of planning if pre-school were to move to the elementary schools, but it won't be the same. Kids who attend Fort Meadow need to have their own building, their own classrooms, rooms dedicated just to PT, OT, Speech, and autism with a pre-school focus in each room, their own bathrooms as many are learning to toilet train, their own play ground that meets their needs, and most importantly, a staff truly dedicated to these children and their development. Closing Fort Meadow would truly be a disservice to Jack and the rest of the Westfield community.

Dawn Osowski, Curtis Street, Westfield, MA

My name is Dawn Osowski my daughter is 4 and she goes to Fort Meadow preschool. She has Autism and speech and developmental delays I am beyond sad and concerned about the mention of voting on the closing of this Preschool and dividing the preschool classes to multiple elementary schools. This school staff and Teachers have been nothing short of amazing with the handling of students and the parents of the students with special needs! This school year and the past has definitely has been hard and demanding for these teachers and students but they all pivoted and now to pull the shutting down of a preschool that serves the needs of special need student is a terrible idea. This school is a warm welcoming place for young children it is a small school setting which is perfect for students just starting out their learning! This year is my daughter's last year I have been involved with the PTO this year and the last, I am the secretary of the PTO this year and the work the teachers staff and PTO put into this school is amazing and how much they have helped my child to grow and finally get words after she was nonverbal I can never thank this school enough! I think if you were to close this school it would be a huge disservice to the students and the community of Westfield. I have nothing but a strong opposition to the closing of this school I will stand with this school to keep it open. Please feel free to read my letter to the school committee I am a concerned parent of a special needs child that feels if this school were to close special needs children will fall behind and not get the services splitting the preschool into multiple elementary schools. I am writing in regards to the proposal of shutting down Fort Meadow ECC and dispersing the preschool into elementary schools within the district. The staff and environment of Fort Meadow are a large part of why the children who attend are successful; they feel supported, safe, and their needs are met. Closing Fort Meadow would negatively impact the younger children in the city of Westfield. Thank you for your time a concerned Fort Meadow parent.

Shaina Nash, Woodsong Road, Westfield, MA

I am writing in regards to the proposal of shutting down Fort Meadow ECC and dispersing the preschool into elementary schools within the district. The staff and environment of Fort Meadow are a large part of why the children who attend are successful; they feel supported, safe, and their needs are met. Closing Fort Meadow

would negatively impact the younger children in the city of Westfield.

Daniel Nash, Woodsong Road, Westfield, MA

I am writing in regards to the proposal of shutting down Fort Meadow ECC and dispersing the preschool into elementary schools within the district. The staff and environment of Fort Meadow are a large part of why the children who attend are successful; they feel supported, safe, and their needs are met. Closing Fort Meadow would negatively impact the younger children in the city of Westfield.

Katharine Brady, Cornish Drive, Westfield, MA

My name is Katharine Brady I am a Mental Health Counselor, and parent of a potential Fort Meadow Student. I spent five years 2015-2020 employed at Westfield Infant Toddler Early Intervention Services and have had the pleasure of working closely with, teachers, staff, and Meredith Lewis at Fort Meadow. As a professional working with the families of children with developmental disabilities Fort Meadow has been a beacon of hope that the future and transition into the public school system will be successful for their children. Fort Meadow has proven to be an invaluable program to all children but especially any child with a developmental disability. Research has shown that early intervention is crucial in children overcoming delays and making progress, as well as feeling successful in their academic journey. Westfield is lucky enough to have a preschool program with highly trained competent staff that provide an inclusive learning environment for children at a very critical developmental age. Keeping these professionals in one separate school allows children the opportunity to have age appropriate peer models with specialized care. If Fort Meadow classrooms were to be separated and redistributed throughout the existing elementary schools this unique and important educational opportunity would cease to exist. Yes, these children would still have the opportunity for preschool however it would not be the careful constructed supportive environment the Fort Meadow classroom sets up for these young children. As a parent, I am especially concerned of the redistribution of Fort Meadow classrooms. The current pandemic and restrictions upon education have made many barriers to children, as a mother of a 3-year old who has missed a year of schooling and the opportunity to adjust and separate from me I have concerns about sending her into a new school year with a new program in a larger elementary school with a vast age range of children. I believe it is crucial that Westfield maintains the Fort Meadow program to allow these children to access the most academically supportive school environment possible.

Emily Scanlon, Shaker Road, Westfield, MA

I am a parent of a student that is currently attending Fort Meadow preschool. I wanted to voice my opposition to the idea of closing Fort Meadow and moving the students into the elementary schools in Westfield.

1. Fort Meadow is such a wonderful separate place for students of a young age and I feel like adding students starting at 3 years old to a larger Elementary School would be overwhelming to these children.
2. A main reason why Fort Meadow functions so well is because it is separate and functions separate from the elementary schools. They are able to truly give the time and attention to the special needs students that is needed at this young age. I feel moving these students into the elementary school and adding them to the \ tasks for current principals and teachers it will lose the special attention that

these children so desperately need.

3. I feel that Westfield has plenty of financial resources to be able to make repairs to the Fort Meadow building, or simply build a new facility. As a homeowner my property taxes have gone up substantially every single year and I know that this goes to the schools in Westfield. I am more than happy to see the increase each year as my student is a direct recipient of the special needs services and increased money being poured into the school.
4. As many of us already are aware, the capacity for students in the current school buildings in Westfield is already maxed out. There really is not space to integrate the number of students and special needs teachers and classrooms into the current facilities.
5. I hope that is a school committee you truly consider what parents want for their children in the Westfield School District. You are our Representatives for the school district and in that I feel are required to represent the desire of the parents in the district.

Kelly Freeman, Shadow Lane, Westfield, MA

Respected School Committee Members,

I write today with significant concern regarding the proposed closure of Ft. Meadow Preschool. My two older children have gone through the program, and we have two younger children who would be going through the program when at the appropriate age. I can attest firsthand what an absolute, and undeniable necessity a dedicated public preschool in the district is.

Our elementary schools are already stretched thin in both space and resources (as partially evident by the recent restructure of the elementary and middle school programs). I have concerns about how the population of students would be divided up. I do not believe the demographic spread would allow for a continuous, robust enrollment at some schools, while other schools would be overwhelmed with enrollment requests.

My greatest concern is at the root of the child's heart. Three year olds are vastly different from fourth graders. Staff have been trained and conditioned to a specific age level. Integrating the preschool raises large concern for the well-being and age appropriateness of staff interactions/expectations, interactions with older peers, and general mental well-being of the younger child. Fort Meadow is a gem. This program is tailored to meet the learning and social needs of this very specific age group. The team at Ft. Meadow is so incredibly talented and specialized in what they do --- it is not a common skill set to be able to get to the level of a 3 or 4 year-old and successfully help them navigate through their biggest learning hurdles, fears, milestones, triumphs, and opportunities.

Fort Meadow's program allows it to hone in to the needs of the youngest learners. Enrichment programs, the integrated peers/special needs approach, and a team of specialists available makes this program not only unique, but absolutely essential to many of these kid's successes in elementary school. While I can see how teachers can be divided among the district, I do not feel that the services and team approach can in any way be equally and appropriately divided to have adequate resources available at four schools that would house preschool level students. With money always being the root of all the board's decisions, I also couldn't imagine they would hire that many FTEs to mirror the teams and resources

currently available at Ft. Meadow. Lastly, Ft. Meadow is a shining example of collaboration. Since their age group is highly focused to preschool only, all staff and team members can work together to find creative solutions to the many needs and challenges that regularly arise.

I strongly feel that preschool children and elementary children do not belong in the same learning environment. Fort Meadow is the epitome of a student-first approach and needs to not only be saved, but promoted and lifted up as a model to other areas in our region. Instead of closing the program, consider investing in it, marketing it, and grant it the opportunity to grow and thrive for many more years and generations to come.

Michael Erwin, Westwood Drive, Westfield, MA

Please let this email serve as my public participation voicing my unwavering support for the Ft. Meadow School and dedicated preschool program as it stands. I strongly oppose integrating the preschool program into already overwhelmed elementary schools.

Evelyn Beckett, Riverside Drive, Westfield, MA

I am writing to you in concern of the recent proposal to close Fort Meadow ECC. I of course do not know all the details and plan on joining tonight's zoom meeting to learn more. My main concern is that this is not to take effect immediately. I have a 3-year old son who is on an IAP for speech. Due to COVID, he did not have a smooth transition from THOM to Fort Meadow. He went approximately 6 months without services and unfortunately had a setback in his speech. After some time adjusting to the new school he was able to make some progress again in his speech, but then had to go full remote again causing another setback for him. Back again at school, we are hoping he can regain the skills he had before. We understand that COVID has made for a very challenging year. But as a parent it is heartbreaking to see my child make amazing progress to then have another setback. We are working diligently to catch him up to his peers but it is hard seeing him avoid any interaction with peers because he knows his speech is not understood by everyone. I am sure my child is not the only one that has had a hard time adjusting to the COVID rules and has had setbacks. As I'm sure you can understand, at least waiting until the new school year to move the children and not uprooting them immediately may make for an easier transition. To my understanding, the plan is to disperse the children to the elementary school in their area. If this is the proposed plan, I have a few concerns. For one, my child may lose his teacher. A teacher that has put in so much time and effort to help him grow as a person and build confidence in himself. He is scheduled to keep his teacher next year and he is aware of this. He is so happy that he gets to go back to her in the fall. He is also scheduled for summer school this year. Would he be placed at Fort Meadow or our elementary school in our area? If he is placed at the elementary school in our area, would he lose his transportation because we are within walking distance to the school? As an expecting mother, I had plans for him to take the bus because I will not be able to walk him to school until I have fully recovered from giving birth. I also do not feel comfortable with him being in a school with such older kids. Although my son does not interact with the kids in the other classrooms due to COVID, it is comforting to him to see them in the hallways/bus/walking to school. Seeing much older kids in the school would be very intimidating and I feel like this would cause a setback in his confidence. I

love that Fort Meadow has their own bathroom in each classroom. This made it more friendly for when he was potty training. All the staff at Fort Meadow are amazing, and have always gone above and beyond for their students. It's truly a family over there and I would hate to see the community such a wonderful place. I look forward to tonight's meeting, and hope that not only mine but all of the parents' concerns are considered and addressed.

Jill Soller-Mihlek, Bates Street, Westfield, MA

I am writing in response to the news of plans to close Fort Meadow Early Childhood Center.

My family has a long history with Fort Meadow, and my daughter is currently a student there. I have seen first-hand how wonderful it is, not only for the youngsters, but also for the staff, many of whom have been there for years. Fort Meadow's integrated approach to the early childhood education experience is unmatched in the area. To lose this unique and historic institution would be to lose a brilliant and vital part of the Westfield Public School System.

Meghan Kane, Plantation Circle, Westfield, MA 0

I am writing today to plead for your support to keep Fort Meadow ECC open. Fort Meadow is a very special place. It provides our children with countless resources, services, education and social interaction. I am lucky enough to have a child enrolled at Fort Meadow. She and I have loved our time at this school and we look forward to sending our younger children to Fort Meadow in the future. The teachers and staff at the school were some of the district's first to return to in person learning and have been working tirelessly ever since. It was a bastion of hope for us last fall. The fact that the school was able to successfully open last fall and remain open, save for the district wide shut down after the holidays, should be a source of pride for you. Every day I witnessed 3, 4 and 5 year olds happily attending school, masks and all.

Fort Meadow as a public preschool provides such invaluable services for an extremely diverse population of our school children. It is imperative that you provide your support for these children through your support of Fort Meadow.

I do not know if there are detailed plans yet for what will become of the Fort Meadow school population. My assumption is that the reason for the proposed closure is financial. As a rule, a public school does not generate its own revenue for a district or municipality. However, Fort Meadow is a tuition based preschool. Therefore, Fort Meadow is generating revenue for its programs. I would not claim that Fort Meadow is self-sufficient but that is not a claim to be made by any school within our district. We have poured money into our other schools, please do not exclude Fort Meadow from these discussions. Show our youngest school children how much you support them and their families by keeping Fort Meadow ECC open. Thank you for your time.

Dominika Podolska-Blair, Jeremy Drive, Westfield, MA

As a parent, I can't tell you how much I have valued the education and care my now kindergartner who had special needs received at Fort Meadow. It is exactly the reason my second child currently attends there as a peer.

Fort Meadow was a great start for my child. It is where we learned we needed additional testing done and where we received help in dealing with our new normal.

That kind of help was so valuable I can't imagine someone else not having it.

I feel as though moving preschoolers into the elementary schools would pose some challenges. While I can absolutely appreciate that some older kids may be good with preschoolers, others are not, due to a lack of experience or other reasons. Moving preschool classrooms into an elementary school, that already has challenges and restrictions on how many students can attend daily due to space and resources, does not seem to be a good solution. The small classrooms and family feel and care the preschoolers receive at Fort Meadow cannot be recreated by spreading them out all over the elementary schools and that would be a huge loss for these students.

Greg Freeman, Shadow Lane, Westfield, MA

As a parent of former and future Fort Meadow students it is very disheartening to see this abrupt announcement with little information to back up the claims. We all understand that the physical building is dated, however the core function of this school outweighs any costs that would be needed. The peer system used at Fort Meadow is critical to the success of Westfield students. The thought that these students will simply be absorbed into already overcrowded elementary schools is ridiculous and short sighted. There are far too many children with learning delays and disabilities that will be forgotten. You would be lying to the residents and parents of Westfield to say the level of attention to these students will be maintained. This decision will have ripple effects. Does the whole district then get restructured, again! What about the specialists that work with these students everyday? Don't forget about those students! The school board and city need to exhaust all options before giving up on these students.

Sandra Guilbert, Susan Drive, Westfield, MA

There is an items on tonight's agenda that I feel warrants much discussion and input from a variety of perspectives. Included in the body of this email are some discussion points that I feel are of utmost importance when discussing the possible dismantling our integrated public preschool program.

- The integration of all preschool children across Westfield maximizes opportunities for all students to encounter a variety of languages, cultures, races, abilities.
- The collaboration and team approach to fully integrate all children into any classroom (students are not grouped by disability)
- Access to appropriate sized bathrooms with changing tables
- Appropriate sized furniture and gross motor equipment
- Opportunities and supplies for daily gross motor play indoors and out
- Space for sensory rooms and break rooms for students
- Consideration for the high level of related services (speech, OT, PT) preschool aged children receive and the equipment that they share.

These are just a few of the items that need further scrutiny as this proposal is considered. In conclusion, Fort Meadow Early Childhood Center offers an integrated experience. Each classroom is specially designed and staffed to meet a variety of needs within a single classroom. As such, students with special needs are given valuable years of social interaction, the opportunity to build peer relationships, and receive quality special education services while participating in lessons, and activities with their peer partner counterparts. The students of this district are counting on you to protect their best possibility for future success. Early intervention is statically proven to help those with special needs close development

gaps but how that instruction is delivered is of critical importance. Thank you for your careful consideration of this matter.

Raphaella Dupras, East Glen Drive, Westfield, MA

I'm writing to you to express my concern over hearing that the superintendent wants to close down Fort Meadow preschool because it is too expensive to repair. This is such a disappointing thing to learn because it is an amazing school and deserves to stay open to continue helping our young children learn and grow. My 9-year old son who is now in grade 4 and thriving started out at Fort Meadow when he was just 3 years old and we had learned not long before then he had autism. Everyone at Fort Meadow welcomed him with open arms and patience beyond what I could have ever hoped. He learned to speak with them, learned how to make friends, how to make choices for himself, how to use his voice and control his emotions. Without his preschool I don't know where he would be now, and with a soon to be 3-year old son who is supposed to start at Fort Meadow in April who has speech and language delays it scares me to think he won't have the same amazing start that his older brother was so lucky to get. I'm respectfully asking that you hear the parents/teachers in this town who are telling you that closing down the school would be a detriment to our children. Thank you for your time.

Diane Mayhew stated that additional emails were submitted but will not be read this evening due to time constraints. All submissions will be included in the meeting minutes.

Nicole Kane, Broadway, Westfield, MA

My daughter went there for 2 1/2 years and I have a younger son who I would/will be sending in September and I currently have a son who went half the year last year and is there now and on an IEP. I think my biggest concern with shutting down Fort Meadow would be the space and resources for the kids. How are they going to split all the special education equipment and resources? Seems like a bigger project to take on. I look forward to hearing your solutions to these questions at the meeting tonight.

Sarah Timmerman, Franklin Avenue, Westfield, MA

I am writing to you all today because I heard that closing Fort Meadow E.C.C. and instead adding classrooms to the elementary schools has come up for discussion. I really do not believe that would be the right choice for the future of the preschool program. Fort Meadow has been a fixture in our community for a long time as our public preschool, and for good reason. It is such a great, fully inclusive, loving and nurturing environment for our youngest learners. I myself have had all four of my children attend Fort Meadow over a span of 10 years total. I can't say enough good things about the wonderful teachers and staff, as well as the preschool program as a whole. My children still remember their teachers and their experience from there fondly despite being older now. I think that says a lot. After all of my children moved on from Preschool I was fortunate enough to work at Fort Meadow and got to then see from a different perspective that it's just as much of a wonderful place for young children to learn and grow as I thought it was as a parent. When children attend Fort Meadow they walk into a small, safe, and welcoming environment that is specifically tailored to their young age group and needs. I just don't think that taking that away from these children and splitting up such a positive learning environment for beginning learners, many with higher needs that thrive on being in Fort Meadow

as their initial learning experience is the right choice. That aside I also worry about the space that it would take to add all of these classrooms to elementary schools. With COVID still being something to take into consideration how would more classrooms and children be added safely? Thank you for all of your consideration.

John Pumphrey, North Road, Westfield, MA

My name is John Pumphrey of 255 north road Westfield. I am a parent of a Fort Meadow child and my youngest daughter will be attending in the fall. Please consider the fact that a stand alone school is important for the littlest ones because they're only among their peers. They don't need to be influenced by older kids. Nor separated by such a great distance it's a cohesive unit for pre k learning that would raise costs for this program dramatically. If cost of the school is an issue maybe consider updating the 100+ yr old building there are many ways to make this school more efficient and affordable for the district. Please consider all the options before considering closure of an important program. Including the playground equipment that is specifically tailored to pre k sized children and all the indoor play equipment that is in the gym. All that is shared by all the classes so if you split them into 4 groups of 2 you'll have to quadruple the cost of these things and it's not likely these toys will stay in the hands of the pre k programs at all these schools.

Tiffany Asher, Park Street, Westfield, MA

My name is Tiffany Asher. My daughter Kennedi Holmes previously attended Fort Meadow. She is now a Freshman at the High school. She has attended multiple schools as she has grown. But Fort Meadow is the only school she clearly remembers, as well as the staff. She was a very shy girl, and everyone made her feel important. The education she received at Fort Meadow has helped her become an A+ student who spent 7th & 8th grade with maximum honors and a member of NJHS.

Kristen Siska, Briarcliff Drive, Westfield, MA

My daughter, Ella has attended Fort Meadow since November 2018. I am incredibly grateful this was a choice for our family and Ella. She has flourished under the teachers and leadership at Fort Meadow. The environment that the staff at Fort Meadow create allows children to feel safe and learn during formative early childhood years. The time that students are in school during these years lays the foundation for all their schooling years. Fort Meadow staff in years past have organized and run amazing after school and evening activities that make the students feel special and excited to be a part of their school community.

I urge you to reconsider closing this building and spreading the classrooms amongst the elementary schools. I can understand and appreciate the financial means it will take to renovate the building. However, I believe the benefits of a strong early childhood program contained within the same building far outweighs these financial costs with the progress and gains students make within those four walls. Further if there is a group that could research alternatives to the current plan I would be willing to put in the work to look at alternatives and grants that could be acquired to keep the current building.

Liz Gasiewski, Alexander Place, Westfield, MA

I wanted to write an email to say that both of my children attended Fort Meadow School and I urge you to reconsider closing that school and redistributing the

preschool students amongst other schools. I think Fort Meadow being a stand-alone school provides an amazing service and value to the students of Westfield. Parents of children with and without special needs looking for towns to live in see that school as an amazing support for them and it says a lot about the commitment to a great quality education for all students here in Westfield regardless of need. I met so many amazing families being a part of the Fort Meadow community. Fort Meadow was an amazing resource to myself and my children and I hope it can continue as a stand-alone school here in Westfield.

Lisa Csekovsky, Glenwood Drive, Westfield, MA

I am a teacher myself so my heart is in education. I have not one but two children who go to Fort Meadow School and have had nothing but a WONDERFUL experience at that school with the teachers and principal. It is such a special little school that provides an integrated language based program to its students of needs as well as peer models. My children and myself, always feel so safe and welcome in that school. One of the best things is that we know that our children are safe in this environment as it is only the little ones that attend that school, it creates such a special and unique environment for our children. It also makes sense to keep all the little students together for all the service providers (i.e. speech, OT, PT). Please keep this school open as you would be doing young these young children such a disservice in closing Fort Meadow. Thank you for your consideration.

Amanda Bruno, Bates Road, Westfield, MA

I am writing this email in regards to the proposed closing of Fort Meadow. My younger sister attended Fort Meadow through their Special Education program. My son is currently a student there receiving Speech services and I also have a son who will be attending in the fall. The program that Fort Meadow features is by far one of the best I have come across. The opportunity for special education students to be side by side by their peers is not something that you come across often when looking for programs and the benefits that will elicit is something that will follow these children on both ends for the rest of their school career. Since starting Fort Meadow, I have seen such growth not only in my son's language skills, but in his personality, play, independence and curiosity. He has developed an amazing relationship with his teacher and his paras and it would be devastating to me that he may no longer have that.

Not only is my thoughts with my children, but with the future Fort Meadow families. The atmosphere the school presents is one that is truly like family, and everyone knows your child and cares for them. That is not something they will be able to receive in a larger elementary school. I also feel putting children so young in such a large student population would be incredibly overwhelming to them when starting school, and will cause a lot of issue with younger children transitioning into preschool.

I understand that there are costs that will have to be considered by keeping Fort Meadow open, but I truly believe by doing so, we will be investing into our community and into the future of Westfield Students.

Maggie Grady, Vine Street, Westfield, MA

I am writing as a parent of two students who attended Fort Meadow, and as someone who did part of my teaching practicum at the school. I am also a licensed severe disabilities special education teacher.

Fort Meadow provides a service to our youngest students that many other districts don't provide. It is a safe and nurturing place for our children to begin their education. It bridges EI and the elementary school years.

So much would be lost if pre-school children were added to the elementary buildings. The hallways at Fort Meadow provide a quiet environment for them to learn crucial routines such as waiting in line, walking with the class, and volume levels. Practicing these skills without older students rushing past is ideal.

Also, our children gain so much from the diversity around them at Fort Meadow. Students meet and befriend children from all over the city, something they will lose if there are only 2 classes in each elementary school. There are so many amazing things that can be accomplished for the education of our children by keeping this program alive, especially in the area of inclusive education!!

Tina Elmer, Russell Road, Westfield, MA

Hello, I attended the virtual meeting tonight and I just wanted to make a possible suggestion for Fort Meadow School. I saw the list of the repairs that are needed to be done and the expense associated with it. It makes me think of a situation with a church in Chicopee, MA a very long time ago. The people of the church got together to build it on their own. It became more of a community project when the people themselves worked together to build it... a thought, seeing as it was mentioned that pre-schools are not funded or reimbursed (I forget, sorry) maybe it can be put out to the community to "save our school, together" We are fortunate in Westfield to have numerous professionals in the construction business, carpeting business, plumbing, etc... maybe if we share the need to save our school and ask for residents to work together, maybe as a community, and as professionals, we can get the school repaired, rebuilt, whichever it is and the community will have the blessing of knowing that we pulled together to do this. Thanks for your time.

3. MASC Resolution #1: MCAS and High Stakes Testing

Tim O'Connor moved, Bo Sullivan seconded to move forward the MASC Resolution #1: MCAS and High Stakes Testing, as presented.

The following roll call vote was taken:

	<u>Y</u>	<u>N</u>
Ramon Diaz	X	
Diane Mayhew	X	
Bo Sullivan	X	
Cindy Sullivan	X	
Heather Sullivan	X	
Tim O'Connor	X	
Chairman Humason	<u>X</u>	
	7	<u>0</u> motion passes

4. Approval of February 22, 2021 School Committee meeting minutes:

Ramon Diaz moved, Heather Sullivan seconded to approve the February 22, 2021 School Committee meeting minutes.

The following roll call vote was taken:

	<u>Y</u>	<u>N</u>
Ramon Diaz	abstain	

Diane Mayhew	X	
Bo Sullivan	X	
Cindy Sullivan	X	
Heather Sullivan	X	
Tim O'Connor	X	
Chairman Humason	<u>X</u>	
	6	<u>        </u> 0 motion passes

5. Westfield Public Schools 2020-2021 Back to School Plan

- a. Update on new proposed regulations  
Stefan Czaporowski shared updated on the new proposed regulations from the Commissioner of Education and CDC recommendations.
- b. Impact Bargaining Obligations  
Paula Ceglowski updated the committee on the DLR determination regarding bargaining over instructional models.

Diane Mayhew moved, Heather Sullivan seconded to authorize the Superintendent submit a waiver to the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education regarding the April 5, 2021 return date to school instruction.

The following roll call vote was taken:

	<u>Y</u>	<u>N</u>
Bo Sullivan	X	
Cindy Sullivan	X	
Heather Sullivan	X	
Ramon Diaz	X	
Diane Mayhew	X	
Tim O'Connor	X	
Chairman Humason	<u>X</u>	
	7	<u>        </u> 0 motion passes

6. Assessment & Accountability update

Denise Ruzala shared a presentation with the committee (attached).

7. Approval of home school application HE2021-218

Ramon Diaz moved, Bo Sullivan seconded to approve home school application HE2021-218.

The following roll call vote was taken:

	<u>Y</u>	<u>N</u>
Cindy Sullivan	X	
Heather Sullivan	X	
Ramon Diaz	X	
Diane Mayhew	X	
Bo Sullivan	X	
Tim O'Connor	X	
Chairman Humason	<u>X</u>	
	7	<u>        </u> 0 motion passes

8. 2<sup>nd</sup>/final reading, by title only, of School Committee Policy  
 a. File: EFC Free and Reduced Price Food Services  
 Diane Mayhew moved, Ramon Diaz seconded for a 2<sup>nd</sup>/final reading, by title only, of School Committee Policy File: EFC Free and Reduced Price Food Services.

The following roll call vote was taken:

	<u>Y</u>	<u>N</u>
Heather Sullivan	X	
Ramon Diaz	X	
Diane Mayhew	X	
Bo Sullivan	X	
Cindy Sullivan	X	
Tim O'Connor	X	
Chairman Humason	<u>X</u>	
	7	<u>0</u> motion passes

9. Approval to offer School Choice for the 2021-2022  
 a. Elementary K-4

Amended motion: Ramon Diaz moved, Bo Sullivan seconded to approve a total of 79 school choice openings, at various elementary K-4 schools/grades, as presented:

The following roll call vote was taken:

	<u>Y</u>	<u>N</u>
Ramon Diaz	X	
Diane Mayhew	X	
Bo Sullivan	X	
Cindy Sullivan	X	
Heather Sullivan	X	
Tim O'Connor	X	
Chairman Humason	<u>X</u>	
	7	<u>0</u> motion passes

- b. Westfield Intermediate School

Ramon Diaz moved, Bo Sullivan seconded to approve a total of 20 school choice openings at Westfield Intermediate School (10 in each grade).

The following roll call vote was taken:

	<u>Y</u>	<u>N</u>
Diane Mayhew	X	
Bo Sullivan	X	
Cindy Sullivan	X	
Heather Sullivan	X	
Ramon Diaz	X	
Tim O'Connor	X	
Chairman Humason	<u>X</u>	
	7	<u>0</u> motion passes

- c. Westfield Middle School

Ramon Diaz moved, Bo Sullivan seconded to approve a total of 20 school choice openings at Westfield Middle School (10 in each grade).

The following roll call vote was taken:

	<u>Y</u>	<u>N</u>
Bo Sullivan	X	
Cindy Sullivan	X	
Heather Sullivan	X	
Ramon Diaz	X	
Diane Mayhew	X	
Tim O'Connor	X	
Chairman Humason	<u>X</u>	
	7	<u>0</u> motion passes

d. Westfield High School

Ramon Diaz moved, Bo Sullivan seconded to approve a total of 40 school choice openings, with a 10% variance at, Westfield High School.

The following roll call vote was taken:

	<u>Y</u>	<u>N</u>
Cindy Sullivan	X	
Heather Sullivan	X	
Ramon Diaz	X	
Diane Mayhew	X	
Bo Sullivan	X	
Tim O'Connor	X	
Chairman Humason	<u>X</u>	
	7	<u>0</u> motion passes

10. Acceptance of Special Revenue Accounts

Ramon Diaz moved, Bo Sullivan seconded to accept the Special Revenue Accounts, as presented.

The following roll call vote was taken:

	<u>Y</u>	<u>N</u>
Heather Sullivan	X	
Ramon Diaz	X	
Diane Mayhew	X	
Bo Sullivan	X	
Cindy Sullivan	X	
Tim O'Connor	X	
Chairman Humason	<u>X</u>	
	7	<u>0</u> motion passes

11. Report of the weekly signed warrants

Bo Sullivan reported that the following warrants were signed:

January 29, 2021 – 16 batches totaling \$795,393.02

February 5, 2021 – 13 batches totaling \$166,395.89

February 12, 2021 – 14 batches totaling \$542,088.18

February 19, 2021 – 12 batches totaling \$118, 217.41

12. Early Childhood Inclusion Plan  
Superintendent Czaporowski shared the attached presentation regarding the Early Childhood Inclusion plan (attached).
  
13. Superintendent's Reports  
Superintendent Czaporowski reported that Mr. James Shea passed away. Mr. Shea was the former Superintendent of Schools and Business Manager for the Westfield Public Schools. A moment of silence was observed.  
  
Tim O'Connor extended condolences, on behalf of the committee, to fellow School Committee member Ramon Diaz for his recent loss.
  
14. Mayor's update  
Mayor Humason announced that City Hall would be open to the public on April 1, 2021.
  
15. School Committee update
  
16. Items for referral to subcommittees: none
  
17. Old business: none
  
18. Subcommittee Reports/Recommendations
  - a. Reports: none
  - b. Minutes: none
  
19. Any other items not reasonably anticipated 48 hours prior to the meeting.
  
20. Next regular School Committee Meeting: March 15, 2021

At 10:00 pm Tim O'Connor moved, Cindy Sullivan seconded to adjourn the meeting.

The following roll call vote was taken:

	<u>Y</u>	<u>N</u>
Ramon Diaz	X	
Diane Mayhew	X	
Bo Sullivan	X	
Cindy Sullivan	X	
Heather Sullivan	X	
Tim O'Connor	X	
Chairman Humason	<u>X</u>	
	7	0

motion passes

Mr. Stefan Czaporowski, Superintendent of Schools  
Clerk – Westfield School Committee

A true copy, Attest:

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Diane Mayhew, secretary  
Westfield School Committee

DM/cm