

**WESTON BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Weston, CT**

**Meeting Date:** January 27, 2020

**Information Only**

**Action Requested**

**Agenda Item Subject:** Recommended Graduation Date 2019-20

**Submitted by:** William McKersie

**Document Summary/Purpose and/or Recommended Action:**

**Dr. William McKersie will present to the Board of Education the recommendation for setting the graduation date for June 2020.**

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<https://meeting.cabe.org/public/Agency.aspx?PublicAgencyID=47&AgencyTypeID=1>



Weston Public Schools  
Office of the Superintendent  
William S. McKersie, Ph.D.

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## MEMORANDUM

To: Weston Board of Education  
Date: January 27, 2020  
Subject: Recommended Graduation Date, 2019-20

### **Background**

As required by WPS Policy, the Weston Board of Education (BOE) annually sets the Graduation Date for Weston High School. The BOE sets the date by either a direct vote or by authorizing the Superintendent to set the date. This year, the BOE is being asked to authorize the Superintendent to set the date as of April 1, 2020.

A new Connecticut law allows school districts to set a firm graduation date as early in the year as necessary; no longer waiting until after April 1 of the relevant school year. Knowing that several districts had taken advantage of the new law, BOE members, as well as parents of seniors (Class of 2020), asked if Weston would follow suit. In response, the Superintendent met with Lisa Wolak, Juli Givoni, Matt Filip and Mark Berkowitz in November 2019 to review what would be possible. The legal basis also was reviewed and area superintendents were polled.

At the December 16, 2019 BOE Meeting, the administration advised the BOE that we would bring a final recommendation to the BOE at its January 27, 2020 BOE Meeting. We used the December BOE meeting to explain three factors affecting the timeframe for setting the Graduation Date and sought BOE feedback.

First, and most important, WHS is not able to hold graduation when school is still in session. We can hold a wonderful ceremony on the final day—when we know all exams and activities are completely done for all students. We cannot hold a fitting ceremony if exams, classes and other student obligations are still underway. Thus, we cannot set the date ahead of what would be the 180<sup>th</sup> day for all WHS students. With this in mind, if we recommend setting the date earlier than April 1, we likely would do so with the proviso that it would move one day for every school day lost due to inclement weather or other issues.

Second, the legal basis for allowing seniors to graduate ahead their 180<sup>th</sup> day of school is not fully understood. The law has changed, but we still lack the Commissioner's guidance on

whether or not seniors would be required to return after graduation if they have yet to complete their 180<sup>th</sup> day.

Third, fewer than half of area districts have taken advantage of the new law. Those who are continuing with the traditional April 1 timeframe seem to share our concerns of logistics and legal flexibility. In short, we would be among a majority of area districts holding to the April 1 timeframe for a decision.

In response to these three issues, the BOE was supportive of the Superintendent bringing to the January 27, 2020 BOE Meeting the recommendation to continue with the April 1 timeframe for setting the Graduation Date.

### **Recommendation**

As Superintendent, I am recommending that the Weston Board of Education authorize the Superintendent to set the Graduation Date for the 2019-20 School Year as of Wednesday, April 1, 2020. I will coordinate with Ms. Lisa Wolak in the setting of the date, and communicate the decision as soon as possible to all WHS families and staff. This is the standard practice the WPS has followed for many years.

I look forward to discussing this recommendation with the BOE on Monday, January 27, 2020.