

EXETER-WEST GREENWICH February 26, 2008

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

MINUTES

The Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District School Committee held a meeting on this date at 7:00 p.m. in the Exeter-West Greenwich Jr. – Sr. High School Library. Members present were Susan DeSack, Chairperson; Gregory Coutcher, Clerk; Frank Maher; Mary Walsh; William Munroe; and Robert Bollengier. Teri Cicero, Vice Chairperson was absent. Superintendent Thomas J. Geismar; Director of Administration Robert V. Ross; Director of Curriculum Nancy I. Daley; and Director of Special Services Carmella Farrar were present. Student Member Katherine Matook was absent.

ORDER – Chair DeSack called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all and Chair DeSack read the District Mission Statement.

OPEN FORUM – None

PRESENTATION – Student Member Report – None

ROUTINE ITEMS – CONSENT AGENDA – Superintendent Geismar gave an overview of the Consent Agenda. He reported that Attorney Ragosta has advised that the January 29, 2008 Executive Session Minutes should be sealed and that granting Mrs. Petrarca's request to

continue her leave of absence does not conflict with the CBA as it is currently written.

Member Bollengier requested to pull consent agenda items, V., B. 1. a. and c. for discussion.

Clerk Coutcher requested to pull consent agenda items, Temporarily Sealed Executive Session Minutes of January 29, 2008 and V., B. 2. a. for discussion.

Member Bollengier moved to accept the consent agenda with items, V.,B.,1.,a and c. and Temporarily Sealed Executive Session Minutes of January 29, 2008 and V., B., 2., a. pulled. Seconded by Member Munroe. Voted 6 - 0 in favor.

The following items were approved:

A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Minutes of January 22, 2008; Regular Minutes of February 12, 2008; Special Meeting Minutes of January 29, 2008; Executive Session Minutes of February 12, 2008

B. Personnel Items

1. Appointments – (As Recommended by the Superintendent)

a. Pulled

b. Bonnie Dunn as 1.0 FTE Custodian, 2nd Shift; Step 1; Annual Salary - \$23,698.80 at EWG Junior High School; effective on or about February 27, 2008

c. Pulled

2. Leaves of Absence

a. Pulled

3. Resignations

4. Grievances

5. Non-Renewals – (As Recommended by the Superintendent, with Regret)

a. See Attached FINAL List REVISED 2/26/08

6. Recalls

a. See Attached INITIAL List

7. Sabbaticals

C. Bills – (ENCLOSED) – In the amount of \$279,596.59

End Consent Agenda

Budget 2008 – 2009 – Chair DeSack reminded members of the Budget Workshop scheduled for Thursday, February 28, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. in the Jr. – Sr. High School library.

Superintendent Geismar reviewed the Correspondence.

Correspondence – (1) February 15, 2008 EWGRSD District Discipline Report 07/08; (2) February 15, 2008 EWG Senior High School – Discipline Report; (3) February 8, 2008 Letter from Attorney Gorham

regarding Procedures and Responsibilities for a Bond Issue for the School District; (4) RIDE February 12 2008 Statewide Transportation and Uniform Chart of Accounts Update; (5) February 26, 2008 RIDE News Advisory; (6) February 26, 2008 Memorandum from Superintendent Geismar to the School Committee Re: Brief; (7) February 25, 2008 Memorandum from EWG Teachers' Association Negotiating team to School Committee Regarding EWGTA Actions

Member Coutcher requested to pull Correspondence (7) February 25, 2008 Memorandum from EWG Teachers' Association Negotiating Team to School Committee Regarding EWGTA Actions for discussion.

Member Bollengier requested to pull Correspondence (1) February 15, 2008 EWGRSD District Discipline Report 07/08 for discussion.

Clerk Coutcher read Correspondence (7) out loud:

Please be advised that until a successor agreement is ratified, teachers will attend IEP's, 504's, and any meetings with parents only during the contractual school day.

EWG teachers have always been characterized as dedicated professionals who have consistently been willing to devote countless hours beyond their teaching responsibilities for the benefit of students and quality education. We have worked for six months without

a contract with no real movement on the key issues that would result in a successful agreement. You can not take part in this round of negotiations without an overwhelming sense of the lack of respect and value for what we do as professionals. This has had a negative impact on morale and the spirit of enthusiasm that has always permeated our hallways and classrooms. It has been a painful decision for our membership to recognize that we must take a strong stand. It can no longer be business as usual.

Also be advised of the following actions. Teachers will no longer:

- Be available to monitor students prior to 7:22 at the junior/senior high school**
- Grade senior project essays during planning periods or beyond the contractual school day**
- Complete any work required by RIDE high school diploma requirements (fixing the binder one more time) beyond the contractual school day or contractual school year**
- Participate in any curriculum work beyond the contractual school day or contractual school year**
- Participate in kindergarten registration beyond the contractual school day or contractual school year**
- Participate in Jump Rope for Heart beyond the contractual school day**

- **Participate in Spelling Bee beyond the contractual school day**
- **Participate in Rooster Games beyond the contractual school day**
- **Participate in 100 days activities beyond the contractual school day**
- **Accept future high school co-op students**
- **Accept to serve as future senior project mentors**
- **Facilitate professional development at faculty meetings or professional development days**
- **Hold spring Student Led Conferences at the junior high school**
- **Serve as elementary grade level team leaders**
- **Serve on Faculty Council (honor society)**
- **Serve on any Response to Intervention Team**
- **Serve on the Professional Development Committees**
- **Serve on School Improvement Teams**
- **Serve on curriculum committees (math/ELA)**
- **Serve on student placement committee beyond the contractual school day or contractual school year**
- **Place students on teams or in classes at the junior high school beyond the contractual school day or contractual school year**
- **Assist in any work required for SALT visit at the JHS beyond the contractual school day**
- **Plan or chaperone field trips that extend beyond the school day (unless already paid for)**
- **Chaperone curriculum based trips with the exception of the paid advisor**
- **Chaperone proms, dances or any other extra curricular activities**
- **Chaperone Senior Trips or year end trips that extend beyond the**

contractual school day with exception of paid advisor

- **Coordinate or teach summer school**

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- **Coordinate or participate in math/science fair night**
- **Coordinate or participate in March Madness**
- **Coordinate or participate in art show/exhibit**
- **Coordinate or participate in the Fashion Show at JHS**
- **Coordinate or participate in team building activities over the summer**
- **Coordinate or participate in open honors/orientation events beyond contractual requirement**
- **Attend Honors Night**
- **Attend Athletic Banquets**
- **Attend Senior Night/Banquet**
- **Attend 6th grade parent information night**
- **Attend 8th grade transitional parent night**
- **Attend Partnership with Parents Nights**
- **Attend 8th grade move up ceremony**
- **March or participate in ceremonial activities at high school graduation (teachers wishing to attend will sit together in designated spectator area)**
- **Write quarterly team newsletters**
- **Maintain/update team websites**

Teachers will:

- **Continue on a daily basis to provide high quality, standards based lessons for all of our students**
- **At their discretion may offer after school help for students for 45 minutes, one day per week**

Member Munroe asked if the committee could fire the teachers and expressed his opinion that the teachers' union is selfish. Superintendent Geismar reported that he and Principal Boulé have discussed this matter and are planning for prom and other activities and will advise the committee of a precise plan when completed.

Chair DeSack read the following response out loud:

We are in receipt of your memo of February 25, 2008 in which you describe what teachers will and will not do in light of where we are in the collective bargaining process. We are extremely disappointed that the EWGTA has decided to take such measures.

You cite an overwhelming sense of, "...the lack of respect and value for what we do as professionals." The issues we face in collective bargaining are not about respect or the valuable work teachers perform. The issues are about how we manage to maintain and improve programs for our students, both academic and extra-curricular, that prepare them for the competitive post secondary world they will face and continue to provide all of our employees with salaries, benefits, and working conditions that are fair and equitable given the financial constraints and the pernicious economic

conditions with which all Rhode Islanders are confronted.

The collective bargaining process is not easy. Members of the School Committee negotiating team have made many sacrifices to attend sessions and to prepare for

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sessions. Respect goes two ways. Where is the negotiating team's respect for the School Committee in light of the following?

Every aspect of the expired contract has been honored by the School Committee and the administration. Every teacher who was to receive a step increase did. We did not challenge that law. Every teacher who applied for course reimbursement got it. Teachers received any compensation due them under the old contract for courses they have taken. Stipends are being paid. Class size limits are being honored.

We have made quite a bit of progress at the table on language issues. We have tentative agreements on many articles and we are close to agreement on others. We still have to resolve financial issues and I know we can but it requires the EWGTA to come to the table prepared and realistic about the severe budgetary and fiscal predicaments confronting the district and its constituency.

We are sure that you are aware that the School Committee put a

compensation package on the table for discussion in November. We are still waiting for a written response or counter proposal from the EWGTA.

It has been the EWGTA that has cancelled scheduled mediation sessions not the School Committee. Needless time has been wasted in mediation sessions because your negotiating team has not been prepared to respond to propositions that are on the table.

In your memo you state, "It can no longer be business as usual." We agree so consider the following.

Not business as usual would be to put our heads together to come up with a solution to healthcare that provides our employees with appropriate coverage and accommodates our finances.

Not business as usual would be to acknowledge that for years the School Committee has provided teachers with the best compensation it could. Our teachers' average salary without advanced degrees is \$62,202. Add in degrees, stipends, and other compensation and we have 95 teachers who earn in excess of \$70,000. At least 40 teachers earn more per day than our Director of Administration and our Director of Curriculum. We have a rich healthcare plan that costs over \$14,000 for a family plan that teachers currently pay no more than \$700 per year toward the premium. Our class sizes are excellent. These are good things for teachers that demonstrate the respect and

esteem in which teachers are held. The School Committee and this administration have deep appreciation for the great work teachers have done in this district and we trust are prepared to do going forward as we address the learning gaps of our students who are not proficient on state assessments.

Not business as usual would be to acknowledge that to not share food at negotiating sessions, to not share coffee with colleagues and administrators on the first day back is a slap in the face at the School Committee and administration and does nothing to move the process forward.

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Your memo outlines over 40 bulleted services which the union leaders of EWGTA are forcing teachers to withhold. In our view, this tactic is a coercive, business-as-usual bargaining tactic, most harmful to the students of the district. While you have proclaimed at the negotiating table that teachers are “professional” this reckless tactic undercuts the fundamental notion of professionalism—do no harm to the client. We are sincerely disappointed that the EWGTA would so cavalierly disregard the best interests and welfare of the students of the district.

Make no mistake; the School Committee and the administration want

a fair and equitable contract settled as soon as possible. IT TAKES BOTH SIDES WORKING TOGETHER TO GET THAT ACCOMPLISHED! So, stop the business as usual, come to the table this Saturday prepared to get it done and let's settle. Your current tactic is only hurtful to our students.

Chair DeSack asked for members' feedback regarding the response. Member Maher expressed that he finds it is ironic that this letter comes in the height of what is on the news that "work to rule" is illegal. Chair DeSack expressed her opinion that this is sad because the district has lots of good teachers and the last negotiation session was cancelled by the union.

In response to Member Bollengier's inquiry regarding Correspondence (1) February 15, 2008 EWGRSD District Discipline Report 07/08, significantly the frequency in numbers of occurrences of a particular incident, Superintendent Geismar said that he is not concerned about it being a trend but will continue to monitor it.

Clerk Coutcher moved to make agenda item, In\$ite Certification the next item on the agenda. Seconded by Member Maher. Voted 6 – 0 in favor.

NEW BUSINESS – In\$ite Certification – Superintendent Geismar introduced

Pat Boucher of Bacon & Company, CPA's and District Treasurer Kate

LaCroix. He advised that the InSite Certification Report is something that needs to be ratified and signed. Mrs. LaCroix gave an explanation of the annual In\$ite Expenditure Report and its process. She said that the report has already been uploaded to the state and it is in agreement with the 2007 audit.

2007 Audit Report – Pat Boucher of Bacon & Company, CPA’s gave an overview of the 2007 Audit Report. She and District Treasurer Kate LaCroix answered Chair DeSack’s clarifying questions regarding issues relating to the Sr. High School student activities fund. Superintendent Geismar advised that he intends to meet with Ms. Boucher, Mrs. LaCroix, and others to set checks and balances on funds and to clarify and review accounting processes that must be followed.

Ms. Boucher reviewed the answers that she and Ms. LaCroix enclosed in members’ packets that were in response to a list of questions Member Bollengier had submitted regarding the 2007 audit report. Ms. Boucher, Administrators, and members had a

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general discussion and question and answer session concerning the report content and the accounting processes.

Member Bollengier moved to approve the In\$ite Report. Seconded by

Member Maher. Voted 6 – 0 in favor.

Student Achievement - NECAP Testing Results – Director of Curriculum Nancy Daley referenced the NECAP Results handouts she provided to members and gave a summary of the data. Mrs. Daley gave her preliminary interpretation of the data which she said will subsequently be disaggregated by subcategory. She expressed her areas of concern and made suggestions/recommendations of how the district will work to address those concerns. Mrs. Daley answered members' clarifying questions and they discussed the testing results, district programs, GLE's, curriculum, "teaching to the test", and the testing time frame. She advised that the disaggregated data should be ready in a couple of weeks.

Policies – Review and Adoption - #7603 – High School Graduation Requirements – Amend – Superintendent Geismar said that this policy must be amended to meet the requirements of the new diploma system.

Member Maher moved to accept the Policy #7603 – High School Graduation Requirements as amended. Seconded by Clerk Coutcher. Voted 6 – 0 in favor.

Bayada Nurses – Member Bollengier said that he spoke with Director of Special Education Carmella Farrar regarding this matter because he noticed that each month a large expenditure is paid to Bayada

Nurses. He said that the district apparently provides a nurse to ride on a bus with an out of district student and he wanted to bring it to members' attention because it is very expensive. Ms. Farrar reported that the expenditure is based on the amount of hours that the student attends school and that this is a Medicaid reimbursable expense. She said that Compuclaim has advised her that the district is reimbursed over 50% because the service is medically necessary. Ms. Farrar said that in her 6 – 7 years with the district she does not typically have students in need of this specific service.

SORICO Legislation – Superintendent Geismar referenced the information enclosed in members' packets regarding SORICO legislation which would move the district from SORICO to a new collaborative called Kent County and said that he was asked to provide feedback. He said that he does not have a particular opinion. Members Munroe and Coutcher voiced their opinions that the districts listed under the Kent County collaborative have nothing in common with EWG and it would not be a good fit for the district. Members and the Superintendent discussed possible reasons for the proposed change. Consensus of the committee was that the Superintendent will obtain and bring

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back to the committee additional information pertaining to the

reasons for the proposed change and how the change will benefit the district.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - Wawaloam Fire Alarm – Member Munroe recommended renaming this agenda item to clarify it as an egress issue rather than a fire alarm issue. Director of Administration Robert Ross advised members that the variance hearing is scheduled for next week, Luis Torrado will attend, and Fire Marshal St. Jean will not attend because he is in Florida.

Bond Discussion – Superintendent Geismar updated members on this morning’s Building Committee meeting with RIDE School Construction Coordinator Joe daSilva. He reported that it was a very productive meeting, Phase I has been approved, and Phase II is nearly approved. Director of Administration Robert Ross advised members that Mr. daSilva suggested that the bleachers may not be a reimbursable item and that Mr. Torrado recommended going to bid as an alternative on any items that may not be reimbursable until clarification is obtained. Mr. Ross said that this item is the only one that may be a problem for reimbursement. He concurred that this morning’s meeting was a productive one and said that he anticipates scheduling a subsequent meeting within the next two weeks to update the building committee. Superintendent Geismar briefly reviewed the timeline to date and said that the district is on track. He asked members for feedback regarding the informational flyer that was crafted to inform taxpayers about the bond issue. A discussion

developed surrounding Member Munroe's view that the flyer is not accurate because the state is bankrupt and will not be capable of reimbursing the district for capital repairs. Members reminded Member Munroe that the district will become aware of the reimbursement status prior to the April 7, 2008 District Financial Meeting and that the committee made an agreement that the bond will be altered if state reimbursement is unavailable. Consensus of the committee was to provide Chair DeSack with any feedback within the next couple of days so that the flyer can be mailed to taxpayers. Members and Administrators discussed potential alternatives to address vital repairs should the bond fail. Superintendent Geismar advised that state approval is good for one year.

Health Care Discussion – Director of Administration Robert Ross updated members on his recent meeting with a representative from United Health. Mr. Ross will take the necessary steps to obtain a quote from United Health.

REPORTS/COMMENTS – Chair DeSack reverted to the items that were pulled from the consent agenda. Member Bollengier requested to pull consent agenda items, V. B. 1. a. and V. B. 1. c. for discussion. Director of Maintenance Bill Plumley answered Member Bollengier's clarifying questions concerning these two individuals/positions.

Clerk Coutcher requested to pull consent agenda items, Temporarily sealed Executive Session Minutes of January 29, 2008 and V. B. 2. a.

for discussion. In response to Clerk Coutcher's inquiry, Superintendent Geismar confirmed that Ms. Petrarca is aware that
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this will be the last year that a leave will be granted to her. Members briefly discussed CBA language surrounding Leave of Absence requests.

Clerk Coutcher moved to accept consent agenda items, V. B. 1. a. and c. and V. B. 2. a. Seconded by Member Walsh.

Member Bollengier requested to address the consent agenda items individually. Member Coutcher agreed to withdraw his motion since a vote was called but not received.

Clerk Coutcher moved to accept consent agenda item V. B. 1. a. Seconded by Member Walsh. Voted 4 – 2 in favor. Members Bollengier and Munroe voted no.

Clerk Coutcher moved to accept consent agenda item V. B. 1. c. Seconded by Member Bollengier. Voted 6 – 0 in favor.

Member Walsh moved to approve consent agenda item V. B. 2. a. Seconded by Member Bollengier. Voted 4 – 2 in favor. Clerk Coutcher and Member Maher voted no.

Member Bollengier moved to seal the temporarily sealed Executive Session Minutes of January 29, 2008. Seconded by Clerk Coutcher. Voted 6 – 0 in favor.

The following pulled consent agenda items were approved:

A. Approval of Minutes – Sealed Executive Session Minutes of January

29, 2008

B. Personnel Items

1. Appointments – (As Recommended by the Superintendent) – (No Changes to FTE's)

a. Kevin Fullmer as 1.0 FTE Custodian, 3rd Shift; Step 1; Annual Salary - \$23,692.80 at Metcalf School; effective on or about February 27, 2008

b. Douglas Fulford as 1.0 FTE Maintenance Worker; Step 1; Annual Salary - \$27,519.84 Districtwide, effective on or about March 3, 2008

2. Leaves of Absence – (As Recommended by the Superintendent)

a. Request from Christine Petrarca to continue her leave of absence from her Grade 3 teaching position, in order to complete her experience at RIDE as a Teacher Quality Fellow, for the 2008 – 2009 school year.

IMPORTANT DATES AND MEETINGS – Thursday, February 28, 2008 – Budget Workshop; Wednesday, March 5th-Joint Meeting; Tuesday,

March 11, 2008-School

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Committee Meeting-(Budget Adoption); Monday, March 24, 2008-Public Hearing; Tuesday, March 25, 2008-School Committee Meeting-(Metcalf Presentation @ Metcalf School); Monday, April 7, 2008-District Financial Meeting; Tuesday, April 8, 2008-School Committee Meeting-(High School Presentation); Tuesday, April 22, 2008-School Committee Meeting-(Jr. High School Presentation)

EXECUTIVE SESSION – RIGL 42-46-4 AND RIGL 42-46-5 – None

ADJOURNMENT – Member Bollengier moved to adjourn at 9:15 p.m. Seconded by Clerk Coutcher. Voted 6 – 0 in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

ROBIN CERIO

CLERK