

EXETER-WEST GREENWICH March 25, 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 Metcalf Elementary School cafeteria. Members present were Teri Cicero, Vice Chairperson; Gregory Coutcher, Clerk; Frank Maher; Mary Walsh; William Munroe; and Robert Bollengier. Susan DeSack, 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. Attorney Vincent Ragosta arrived at 8:30 p.m.

ORDER – Vice Chair Cicero called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all and Member Maher read the District Mission Statement.

OPEN FORUM – None

Member Maher made a motion to move up, before Student Member Report, Metcalf School Presentation. Seconded by Clerk Coutcher. Voted 6 – 0 in favor.

PRESENTATION –Metcalf School Presentation – Principal Boyce welcomed all to Metcalf School and introduced music teacher Caroline Scheff and a group of student choir members. Ms. Scheff said that since she has been teaching at Metcalf School there have been 300 students that have participated in the chorale program. She thanked parents for their support. Under Ms. Scheff’s direction, choral students performed a song for the audience. Next, Band Director/teacher Stacey Place led a small group of student members of the after school band in a performance of “Crazy Crocodile”. Ms. Place said that presently there are 85 grade-6 band students and 92 grade-5 band students, and that all grade-4 students are learning to play the recorder. Principal Boyce gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting Metcalf School’s assessment scores and strategies and programs to improve student learning. Vice Principal Carol Fish gave a summary on student discipline, bullying prevention programs, at-risk student programs, and the Metcalf Brochure which is written and produced by students.

Student Member Report – None

ROUTINE ITEMS – CONSENT AGENDA – Superintendent Geismar gave an overview of the Consent Agenda.

Member Walsh moved to accept the consent agenda. Seconded by Member Maher. Voted 6 – 0 in favor.

The following items were approved:

A. Approval of Minutes – Regular Minutes of March 11, 2008; Special Meeting Minutes of November 15, 2007

B. Personnel Items

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

a. Christopher Gillette as 1.0 FTE Senior Computer Support Technician, Districtwide, Annual Salary \$42,495; effective on or about March 26, 2008

b. Audrey Massart as 1.0 FTE Jr. High School French Teacher, Step 1, B, Salary \$34,649; effective March 1, 2008 through the remainder of the 2007 – 2008 school year

2. Leaves of Absence

3. Resignations

a. Letter of Resignation from Christopher Cobain from his position as Sr. High School Boys' Basketball Coach, effective March 17, 2008

4. Grievances

5. Non-Renewals

a. See Attached List

6. Recalls

7. Sabbaticals

C. Bills – In the amount of \$352,274.30

D. Home School Approvals – (As Recommended by the Superintendent)

1. IVES – Alexander and Jennifer

End Consent Agenda

Correspondence – (1) Reading Recovery in RI 2006 – 2007; (2) March 15, 2008 EWGRSD Discipline Report 2007 – 2008; (3) March 15, 2008 EWG Sr. High School Discipline Report; (4) SORICO Legislation

Members did not express any concerns, questions or comments regarding Correspondence.

NEW BUSINESS – Grade 5 Mathematics Program Approval – Director of Curriculum Nancy Daley reported that after much deliberation with grade-5 teachers, it was realized that there are many gaps in the math program and that they have decided to go with the Everyday Math Program for grades K – 5. She reminded members that the curriculum that the School Committee approved last year was Everyday Math for grades K – 4.

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Member Bollengier moved to approve the Grade-5 math program. Seconded by Member Walsh.

In response to Clerk Coutcher's inquiries, Ms. Daley said that although implementation of the new Everyday Math K – 4 program is a little behind schedule with what is expected of the publisher, it is going well; students are enjoying the new program; and a trainer has provided 5 professional development days to teachers.

Voted 6 – 0 in favor.

Policies – Review and Adoption - #7505 – Home-Schooling – 1st Reading – Superintendent Geismar and Director of Curriculum Nancy Daley advised members that the policy subcommittee has made minor revisions to this policy to bring it in alignment with state law. This item will continue to the next regular meeting agenda for a 2nd Reading.

#7502 – Curriculum Coordination and Articulation – 1st Reading – Director of Curriculum Nancy Daley advised members that the previous policy was extremely old and mostly about articulation and that it needs to be in coordination as well. She said that in response to that, the policy subcommittee expanded to review a revision cycle. Ms. Daley explained why curriculum should be reviewed on a yearly basis. Superintendent Geismar said that this is an important policy that will bind the District to continually revisit curriculum to be on target with student achievement. He said that the policy is a curriculum map for parents and teachers. This item will continue to

the next regular meeting agenda for a 2nd Reading.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – 2008 – 2009 School Calendar Approval – Member Walsh moved to accept the 2008 – 2009 School Calendar. Seconded by Clerk Coutcher.

In response to Member Bollengier’s inquiry, Superintendent Geismar confirmed that this calendar reflects the calendar survey results and incorporates the majority opinion of both staff and parents to keep the school calendar the same.

Voted 6 – 0 in favor.

Wawaloam Fire Alarm/Egress Issue – Director of Administration Robert Ross reminded members of events surrounding the variance that the District had partitioned for and that was denied by the RI Safety Code Fire Board of Appeal and Review. He said that he has been in contact with Fire Marshal St. Jean and LA Torrado Architects and that he does not foresee any real issues when they return to the Board, with an egress plan for Wawaloam School, on April 29, 2008.

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Bond Discussion – Superintendent Geismar referenced the

information in members' supplemental packets that he received yesterday from the Rhode Island Department of Education and said that the enabling legislation has been referred to the Senate Finance Committee for approval. He said that it needs to be approved to enable the District to take the vote. Dr. Geismar reported that the Board of Regents has approved the District's construction application and housing aid reimbursement. The district has six-months to begin the work and five-years to complete the project. He said that he and Director of Administration Robert Ross met with Luis Torrado of LA Torrado Architect yesterday to discuss the next steps to complete the project in a timely manner and that it is their recommendation to phase the work. Dr. Geismar acknowledged Mr. Torrado who he invited to attend tonight's meeting. Mr. Ross gave his opinion that it makes sense to consider phasing the project due to the rescheduling of the District Financial Meeting from April 7th to April 21st which results in a 2-week loss of construction time.

Mr. Torrado distributed an April 7th voter approval project schedule and a revised April 21st voter approval project schedule for members' comparison/review. He advised that the April 21st voter approval date, which delays construction by two-weeks, makes it nearly impossible to complete the entire project over the summer break. He explained that should the committee decide to direct him to complete the entire project over the summer, it will result in a substantial financial risk because it will require the district to spend funds on architectural and engineering fees prior to obtaining voters' approval.

Mr. Torrado gave his recommendation to prioritize the work to do this summer and to complete the rest of the project during next school year's vacation breaks. He voiced his opinion that the Jr. – Sr. High School roof and Metcalf School's gymnasium floor are first priority. In response to Member Munroe's inquiry, Mr. Torrado confirmed that if voters do not approve the bond project and the committee does not direct him to complete the entire project by the end of the summer, he will not be paid for any additional architectural and engineering fees beyond those associated with the Jr. – Sr. High School roof and the Metcalf School's gymnasium floor which the committee has already authorized him to do. Mr. Torrado advised that the district is obligated under state requirement to hire an educational planner to look at load and capacity based on the district's enrollment and Program of Study and to have a full energy audit conducted as well. He asked for the committees' approval to prepare for proposal for those two items.

Mr. Ross reported that the State Finance Committee has advised that the athletic field components, totaling \$295,000, which is part of the School Committees' developed list of bond projects to do, is not available for reimbursement. He said that upon advisement of the State Finance Committee, the funds that were appropriated for the athletic fields will be used for the three studies, (commissioning agent-equipment, energy audit, educational planner to conduct a capacity study).

Clerk Coutcher expressed his concerns regarding the District's obligation to have an educational study completed since the District is so small and logically only has one

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elementary school. He expressed his opinion that the District does not have the option to close down a school building and that doing such an analysis is essentially a waste of money. Mr. Torrado advised that the cost of a classroom analysis is \$15,000 and that the formula used to conduct the analysis is tricky. Mr. Ross answered Member Maher's questions regarding the energy audit that was done last year by National Grid. Mr. Ross said that last year's energy audit focused on lighting. The new School Construction Regulations require a complete energy audit. Mr. Torrado asked for the committees' direction to move forward to issue the RFP's since time is limited.

Member Bollengier moved to direct Luis Torrado to begin the recommended process to do anything necessary associated with the RFP's with the understanding that there will be no cost associated to the district. Seconded by Member Walsh.

Member Munroe voiced his opinion that the committee should not direct Mr. Torrado to go out for RFP's prior to providing information to the voters. Vice Chair Cicero said that the RFP preparation is at no

cost to the District. Clerk Coutcher expressed his opinion that a second call should be made to explain the District's situation, prior to issuing a RFP for an educational planner, and he reiterated that the district does not have the option of closing a school; therefore, hiring an educational planner would be a waste of money. Vice Chair Cicero and Member Walsh agreed with Clerk Coutcher. Member Munroe expressed his opinion that it does make sense since the schools are not to capacity. Superintendent Geismar made a recommendation to convene the Building Committee prior to the next regular School Committee date of April 8, 2008.

Vice Chair Cicero reminded members of the motion on the floor.

Voted 5 – 1 in favor. Member Munroe voted no.

Health Care Discussion – Director of Administration Robert Ross reported that he continues his efforts in the process of obtaining a healthcare proposal from United Health.

Reports/Comments – Member Bollengier asked the committee to consider why they have a secretary taking hand written notes at the meetings and said that he wonders if she would be more effective if she were working on a laptop instead. He expressed his opinion that it is an antiquated way of taking notes but said that he would defer to Mrs. Cerio for her comments regarding this matter. Some Administrators and other members expressed their opinions that Mrs. Cerio has her own system for taking notes and that her technique

works. Mrs. Cerio said that she would prefer to have an updated desktop computer in her office to use for her daily work. Member Bollengier said that it is just a comment to make Mrs. Cerio's job easier.

IMPORTANT DATES AND MEETINGS – Wednesday, March 26, 2008-Bond Forum Meeting; Tuesday April 8, 2008-School Committee Meeting-(High School Presentation); Monday, April 21, 2008-District Financial Meeting; Tuesday, April 22, 2008-School Committee Meeting-(Jr. High School Presentation)

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EXECUTIVE SESSION – RIGL 42-46-4 AND RIGL 42-46-5 – Member Walsh moved to go into Executive Session at 8:40 p.m. in accordance with 42 -46-5 (a) (2) – Collective Bargaining Agreement/Negotiation Discussion . Seconded by Member Munroe. Voted 6 – 0 in favor.

Meeting recessed to Executive Session at 9:10 p.m.

Clerk Coutcher moved to reconvene to Open Session. Seconded by Member Maher. Voted 6 – 0 in favor.

Meeting reconvened to Open Session at 10:30 p.m.

No votes were taken during Executive Session.

**ADJOURNMENT – Member Bollengier moved to adjourn at 10:30 p.m.
Seconded by Member Walsh. Voted 6 - 0 in favor. Meeting adjourned
10:30 p.m.**

ROBIN CERIO

CLERK