

**EXETER-WEST GREENWICH February 8, 2011**

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

## **MINUTES**

**The Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District School Committee held a meeting on this date at 6:00 p.m. in the Exeter-West Greenwich Jr. – Sr. High School Library. Members present were Gregory Coutcher, Chairperson; Teri Maia-Cicero, Vice Chairperson; Valerie Zuercher, Clerk; Mark Rafanelli; Theresa Donovan; Paul McFadden; and Claudine Pande. Superintendent Thomas J. Geismar, Director of Administration Robert V. Ross, and Student Member Matthew French were present. Director of Special Services Carmella Farrar was absent.**

**ORDER – Chair Coutcher called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all and Clerk Zuercher read the District Mission Statement.**

**Open Forum – None**

**Recognitions/Achievements – Hera Gallery Art Competition – Young Adults' Exhibition – Dr. Geismar called art teachers Ms. Lind and Ms. Pichette and Principal Butler forward to partake in the recognition of a group of recently honored high school art students. Laura Taylor, Emily Humphrey, and Annie Dwyer were honored for the artwork they**

submitted to the Hera Gallery Art Competition Announcement for the Young Adults' Exhibition. They won the competition and their announcement has gone out statewide. On behalf of the School Committee, Chair Coutcher and Vice Chair Cicero offered congratulations and presented the students with recognition certificates and gift cards.

Scholastic Art and Writing Awards of 2011 – Dr. Geismar stated there were three students who placed in the Rhode Island Scholastic Art Awards (RISAA) competition. The RISAA contest is very competitive and is considered by some as the Olympics for art in Rhode Island. EWG had two Gold Key winners - Katie Acquaro in Mixed Media, and Megan Bresnahan in Ceramics/Sculpture, and one Silver Key winner - Annie Dwyer in Printing. Chair Coutcher and Vice Chair Cicero presented congratulations, recognition certificates, and gift cards for these students.

Lastly, Ms. Lind recognized and congratulated Hera Gallery winners Kayla Bailey – 1st Place – Color Drawing; Kelsey Vivian – 2nd Place – Color Drawing; Rebecca Rowan – 2nd Place – Black and White Drawing; Shelby Olivier – Honorable Mention – Black and White Drawing. These students also hung the show for the gallery. Their names were posted on the wall, thanking them for installing the show. Chair Coutcher and Vice Chair Cicero presented congratulations and gift cards for these students. Recognition Certificates for these students are forthcoming.

**EXETER-WEST GREENWICH February 8, 2011**

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT Page 2**

**Presentation – Student Member Report – Student Member Matthew French reported that students worked through all the snow days to complete exams. In response to Member McFadden’s inquiry, Matthew said that some of the walkways at the high school are somewhat icy. However, students are not having a problem walking.**

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

**Vice Chair Cicero made a motion to accept the consent agenda. Member Pande seconded the motion. Voted 7 – 0 in favor.**

**The following items were approved:**

**A. Approval of Minutes - Regular Minutes of January 25, 2011;  
Executive Session Minutes of January 25, 2011**

**B. Personnel Items**

**1. Appointments**

**2. Leaves of Absence**

**3. Resignations – (As Recommended by the Superintendent, with**

**Regret)**

**a. Letter of Resignation from Eric McMahon from his position as Assistant Boys' Volleyball Coach, effective January 31, 2011**

**b. Letter from Eric McMahon requesting to withdraw his January 31, 2011 Letter of Resignation regarding his position as Assistant Boys' Volleyball Coach**

**4. Grievances**

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

**a. Please see attached Initial List 2/8/2011 REVISED**

**6. Recalls**

**7. Sabbaticals**

**C. Bills – In the amount of \$283,184.40**

**D. Home School Approvals**

**End Consent Agenda**

**Correspondence – (1) Certified Absences and Leave Data; (2) School Committee copies of Letters sent to Local State Representatives and Senator Maher; (3) February 10, 2011 Joint Meeting Initiation**

**Monthly Budget Projection 2010 – 2011 – Director of Administration Robert Ross referenced the February 8, 2011 Budget Projection and reported a projected July 1, 2011 General Fund Balance of \$784,929. The final exit report from the auditor is forthcoming.**

**EXETER-WEST GREENWICH February 8, 2011**

**Budget Update – 2011-2012 – This item was not discussed.**

**Monthly Status Reports – Superintendent –**

**Business - Member McFadden referenced the 2009-2010 Annual Absences for Certified by Building handout, asked clarifying questions, and offered his opinion that the data reveals an average of over five days absent per staff member, which seems high since teachers work 185 days per year. Dr. Geismar stated that if an employee is sick, they take a sick day. If they are out three days or more and the district is unaware of the reason for the absence, they are asked to bring a doctor's note. The district does not want sick people at work. Last year Dr. Gifford of the RI Dept of Health told districts not to incent people to come to school sick. The district has to live by rules surrounding absences and leaves in the Collective Bargaining Agreement. If the committee wants to change the rules, there is a process to do that. Dr. Geismar asked if there is a direction the School Committee wants to give to do something differently. Dr. Geismar added that employees could use sick leave to have a baby or for other long-term medical reasons. He would like to review the data further to determine if those types of leaves affect the data presented tonight, and to compare one school to the other. Director of Administration Robert Ross referenced additional data enclosed as Correspondence (1) and explained it reflects certified absences and**

leaves on a per building basis. For the purpose of tonight's discussion, to offer incentives to employees to lower instances, this report provides information by total days for each reason, for each school. There are ten events why an employee could be absent. Typically, one would look at the sick and personal data if the concept were to incent people to come to work. Sick and personal leave totals are less than five percent. A discussion ensued and the consensus of the committee was to have administration explore the sick and personal leave data to determine if outliers exist and if so remove those numbers from the data to get a more accurate analysis. Dr. Geismar agreed to try to provide the information for the next regular meeting.

**Special Education – Dr. Geismar answered Member Pande's questions regarding professional development for co-teaching teams.**

**Maintenance – Member Pande stated she would like to acknowledge the efforts of Director of Maintenance Bill Plumley and his team for the great work they did on snow removal throughout the district.**

**Clerk Zuercher reverted to the Special Education Status Reports and asked if the Medicaid reimbursement percentage of 63% is an average, high or low amount. In addition, can the district look to increase that percentage? Mr. Ross reported that that percentage is very good and EWG is consistently held up as a district that does well**

**in capturing the data. Dr. Geismar stated that he wants to clarify that Director of Special Education Carmella Farrar is not here tonight because he told her it was not necessary for her to attend meetings when there is nothing on the agenda for her to address.**

**EXETER-WEST GREENWICH February 8, 2011**

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT Page 4**

## **Technology**

**New Business – Approve Strategic Plan – Dr. Geismar introduced District Strategic Plan consultant Eileen Moser to give a brief PowerPoint presentation illustrating the process by which the 2010 – 2015 Strategic Plan was developed. He stated there were twenty-seven planning committee team members. It was an open and thorough process, which took four sessions to complete. It is a simple straightforward plan, which incorporates Race to the Top (RTTT) and the RTTT Scope of Work.**

**Ms. Moser stated that the planning team worked hard and well on thinking through what the community needs. She said her presentation was to give the School Committee a sense of what happened during the process.**

**Clerk Zuercher left the meeting at this time, (6:47 p.m.).**

**Ms. Moser’s presentation included an overview of the purpose/goal of**

**strategic planning and the strategic planning committee.**

**Clerk Zuercher returned at this time, (6:49pm).**

**Next, Ms. Moser presented highlights regarding the various steps it took to complete the process. Dr. Geismar continued the presentation to highlight Goals 1 – 5 Objectives and Action Steps. In summary, Dr. Geismar stated that the plan is a living plan and adjustments would be made when needed. Member Pande commended the planning committee for all its efforts. She said she was impressed with the process and would like to see faculty members, administrators, and parents receive a copy of the plan and signoff to commit to it. She expressed her opinion that if individuals do not continue to work as a community, these goals will not be achieved. Member Rafanelli and other planning committee members offered comments of praise and enthusiasm for the process and end result. Chair Coutcher expressed appreciation for planning committee members' time and effort to complete this process for EWG students.**

**Clerk Zuercher made a motion to approve the Strategic Plan for the district for 2010 – 2015. Vice Chair Cicero seconded the motion. Voted 7 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.**

**Policies Review and Adoption – 4150: AIDS Virus – HIV/Hepatitis – Amendment –**

**3203: Budget Approval by Referendum – 1st Reading – Dr. Geismar**

stated that policy 4150 is being amended to comply with legislation. Member Rafanelli said he would provide a list of typographical errors he found. Clerk Zuercher said she would like the school nurse teacher to review the policy before the School Committee votes to approve it. Vice Chair Cicero who sits on the policy subcommittee assured members that the

**EXETER-WEST GREENWICH February 8, 2011**

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT Page 5**

school nurse teachers reviewed this policy in its original form in 2008. Clerk Zuercher requested once more to have the school nurse teachers review the policy before voting.

Chair Coutcher advised that this policy would continue to the next or first available meeting agenda.

Dr. Geismar stated that the policy subcommittee canceled its last meeting due to inclement weather. The subcommittee could still review policy 3203. However, Mr. Clay inserted the language submitted by Attorney Gorham into the existing policy. Member McFadden asked for clarification regarding the relevance of the \$10,000 amendment language. He stated that previously if an amendment was less than \$10,000 voters were allowed to submit an amendment that day. He asked how any changes of the charter would move forward at the all day referendum. He pointed out that this

policy does not address how charter changes merge into the charter. Member Rafanelli asked how someone makes a recommendation for a charter change. Chair Coutcher said that he does not think it was the intent of the Charter Review Committee to have individuals make changes to the charter. The intent of the subcommittee was to allow amendments to the budget. Member McFadden stated there are two different matters to consider, the charter and the budget. The committee needs to address how amendments to the charter will take place. Chair Coutcher asked how the committee wishes to see charter amendments spelled out. Member Rafanelli and Chair Coutcher agreed to have the Charter Review subcommittee review the process for charter amendments.

Approve Kindergarten move to Wawaloam School for 2011 – 2012 – Principal Melissa Marino presented a proposal to move kindergarten classes from Lineham School to Wawaloam School. She listed various reasons to consider the move for the 2011 – 2012 school year. Principal Marino answered members' clarifying questions regarding how the change will affect the use of Lineham School and its support staff. She reported that the idea of removing one of the Reading Recovery positions and replacing it with an Academic Interventionist is being considered to service reading and math in small groups to identify at risk students grades k – 3. Dr. Geismar told the committee he is in favor of the proposed move. In response to Chair Coutcher's inquiry if there is adequate space at Wawaloam School to have an all day kindergarten program next year should the

**general assembly pass pending legislation mandating all day kindergarten, Principal Marino said that adjustments would have to be made whether kindergarten classes are at Wawaloam or Lineham. Member Pande said the preschool program at Lineham School is an attractive program and should be looked at as a for-profit business.**

**Vice Chair Cicero made a motion to approve moving Kindergarten from Lineham to Wawaloam. Member Donovan seconded the motion. Voted 7 – 0 in favor. The motion carried.**

**EXETER-WEST GREENWICH February 8, 2011**

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT Page 6**

**Approve Job Description for .5 Reading Coordinator Position – Dr. Geismar pointed out that he has changed the name of this position from Reading Coordinator to Reading Supervisor.**

**Vice Chair Cicero left the meeting at this time, (7:45 p.m.).**

**Dr. Geismar said that his budget recommendation is for a .5 Reading Supervisor; however, the job description is for a full-time position. He put forth the job description for approval. Member McFadden offered his opinion that the teachers' union would most likely grieve this article because it sounds like a teaching position to him. Dr.**

**Geismar stressed it is not a teaching position. It would be an administrative/supervisory position.**

**Vice Chair Cicero returned to the meeting at this time, (7:49 p.m.).**

**Member Donovan asked if RIDE Reading Supervisor/Director Certification implies that an individual has supervisory experience. Dr. Geismar said it does not but the individual would have taken classes. Member Donovan offered her view that it is in the best interest of the district to have an applicant to have had supervisory experience. Principal Marino voiced her opinion to first look at the Reading Specialist Certification before supervisory experience. Dr. Geismar recommended adding experience preferred.**

**Vice Chair Cicero left the meeting at this time, (7:51 p.m.).**

**Consensus of the committee was to add supervisory experience preferred as a qualification to the job description. The Reading Supervisor job description will be brought back with modification(s) to the next regular meeting. Member McFadden stated that he supports this position now if funding is channeled properly and it is not subject to a teacher position.**

**Approve 2011 – 2012 School Calendar – Dr. Geismar presented the 2011 – 2012 School Calendar in traditional format to the School Committee for approval. He reminded the committee that three years**

ago staff members and parents were surveyed and did not wish to change from the traditional design. Clerk Zuercher requested to ask for input from the school community prior to finalizing next year's calendar. A discussion ensued and ideas were exchanged for possible alterations to the current format. Member McFadden voiced concern that some changes affect vacation planning and daycare preparations.

Clerk Zuercher made a motion to amend the agenda to move up Establish Healthy and Safe Schools Committee. Member Donovan seconded the motion. Voted 7 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

**EXETER-WEST GREENWICH                      February 8, 2011**  
**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT   Page 7**

Establish Healthy and Safe Schools Committee – Principal Mary Smith requested the committee's approval to consolidate anti-bullying and other safe school efforts to establish a district wide anti-bullying committee.

Clerk Zuercher made a motion to approve establishing a Healthy and Safe Schools Committee district wide. Member Donovan seconded the motion.

Dr. Geismar agreed to bring the School Committee a description and

**composition of the Districtwide Healthy and Safe Schools Committee.**

**Member Rafanelli requested to align the description with the district's goals. Chair Coutcher advised that the School Committee would approve the composition at its next meeting.**

**Voted 6 – 0 in favor. Motion carries.**

**Chair Coutcher reverted to agenda item, Approve 2011 – 2012 School Calendar – Consensus of the committee was to initiate a parent survey and a staff survey through e-mail to query the following:**

- Whether to begin school before or after labor day**
- Whether to eliminate February and April vacation for a one-week break in March**
- Whether the calendar format should remain the same**
- Ask for any other suggestions**

**This item will continue to the next regular meeting agenda for review of the survey data and consideration.**

**Approve Make Up Days – Dr. Geismar stated that the School Committee has already approved make up days for this year. The five days are set in at the end of the school calendar. However, there is not much relief for seniors if any more days are missed. Principal Butler reported that as a precaution he asked the Ryan Center to hold**

**the opening they have on June 18 until they hear back from him. Publication of the diplomas has not started yet. Therefore, options are open. A discussion ensued regarding the prospective of having to reschedule graduation and what options might be available to rearrange the calendar in the event that there are additional snow days this year.**

**This item will continue to the next regular meeting agenda for further discussion.**

**Approve Rescheduling the Feb 22 School Committee Meeting to Feb 15 – Clerk Zuercher made a motion to change the February 22 School Committee meeting to February 15. Member Rafanelli seconded the motion. Voted 6 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.**

**EXETER-WEST GREENWICH February 8, 2011**

**REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT Page 8**

**Legislators' Night Discussion – The School Committee agreed to have a discussion at the next regular meeting about what topics to discuss with local legislators at the March 8 School Committee meeting.**

**Capital Project Update – Dr. Geismar stated that there is nothing new to report on the Capital Project at this time.**

**Reports/Comments – None**

**Important Dates and Meetings – Thursday, February 10, 2011-Joint Meeting; Tuesday, February 22, 2011-School Committee Meeting; Monday, Tuesday, March 1, 2011-Joint Meeting; Wednesday, March 2, 2011-Budget Workshop; Tuesday, March 8, 2011-School Committee Meeting (Budget Adoption); Friday, March 18, 2011-Deadline for Motions to Change the Budget by More than \$10,000; Monday, March 21, 2011-Public Hearing; Tuesday, March 22, 2011-School Committee Meeting; Tuesday, April 12, 2011-School Committee Meeting; Monday, April 11, 2011-All Day Referendum**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION – RIGL 42-46-4 and RIGL 42-46-5 – None**

**Adjournment – Clerk Zuercher moved to adjourn at 8:50 p.m. Member Rafanelli seconded the motion. Voted 6 – 0 in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.**

**ROBIN CERIO**

**CLERK**