

Warwick School Committee Minutes  
Meeting of May 13, 2008  
Open Session

The Warwick School Committee met in Open Session at Winman Jr. High School on May 13, 2008. Chairman Friel called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. with the following in attendance:

**COMMITTEE**

Christopher Friel, Chairperson  
Bethany Furtado, Clerk [present at 6:10]  
Joyce L. Andrade  
Paul Cannistra

**ADMINISTRATION**

Peter P. Horoschak, Superintendent  
Leonard Flood, Director of Business Affairs  
David E. Small, Director of Buildings and Grounds  
Rosemary Healey, Esq., Director of Compliance & Human Resources

MOTION 2008-85: Moved by Mr. Cannistra, seconded by Mrs. Andrade, to go into closed session for discussion and/or action regarding those items of business exempt from open meetings under General Laws of Rhode Island 42-46-5(a)(1), (a)(2) and (a)(9).

MOTION PASSES (3-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye      Joyce L. Andrade - Aye  
Paul Cannistra - Aye

Meeting reconvened at 7:15 p.m. with the following in attendance:

Lucille Mota-Costa, Vice Chair  
Victor Mercurio, Director of Secondary Education  
Robert T. Bushell, Director of Elementary Education  
Richard D'Agostino, Director Special Services

Chairman Friel announced that there was an action taken in Executive Session with a vote of 4-0 to **uphold the denial** of WISE grievances #07-314, 06-302, 06-301 and 05-313.

**Recognitions – 2008 Rhode Island Scholastic Art Awards**

**Aldrich Jr. High:**

Alexandra Egan (gold key mixed media)      Amanda Goodinson (silver key mixed media)  
Chad Jackman (silver key painting)      Jessica Rajotte (silver key mixed media)

**Gorton Jr. High:**

Aubrey Brunelle (silver key sculpture)      Kiri Ellis (silver key mixed media)  
Sally Linphanit (silver key mixed media)      Sebastian Mak (silver key mixed media)  
Cara Nason (gold key mixed media)      Haiden Terrill (silver key mixed media)

**Winman Jr. High:**

Lauren Cobb (silver key mixed media)

**Pilgrim High:**

Isaiah Hector (silver key drawing)      Jaimie Brancato (silver key drawing)  
David Demers (gold key sculpture)      Michael Englert (silver key printmaking)

**Toll Gate High School:**

Hyunah Choi (silver key drawing)      Nicole David (gold key drawing)  
Aaron Myers (gold key photography)      Marian Stacey (silver key drawing)

**Warwick Veterans Memorial High School:**

Briana Goodridge (silver key design: apparel)      John Greene (silver key video and film)

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Kelly Walls, second year student in the Graphic Design program at the Warwick Area Career and Technical Center won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the *Healthy Dating Relationships* poster contest sponsored by the *Lindsay Ann Burke Memorial Fund*. Mr. and Mrs. Burke presented Kelly with \$500 and a mounted copy of her poster. Each high school in Rhode Island will receive a copy of this poster.

**Approval of Minutes of Public Session**

MOTION 2008-86: Moved by Mr. Cannistra, seconded by Mrs. Furtado, to approve the Minutes of the Public Session for April 8, 2008, April 23, 2008, April 28, 2008 and April 29, 2008.

**MOTION PASSES (5-0)**

Christopher Friel - Aye      Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye  
Joyce L. Andrade - Aye      Bethany Furtado - Aye  
Paul Cannistra - Aye

**Vote of Minutes of Executive Session**

MOTION 2008-87: Moved by Mr. Cannistra, seconded by Mrs. Furtado, to approve the Minutes of the Executive Session for April 8, 2008 and April 23, 2008.

**MOTION PASSES (5-0)**

Christopher Friel - Aye      Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye  
Joyce L. Andrade - Aye      Bethany Furtado - Aye  
Paul Cannistra - Aye

**Approval of Transfers**

MOTION 2008-88: Moved by Ms. Mota-Costa, seconded by Mrs. Furtado, approve the transfers presented to the Committee.

**MOTION PASSES (5-0)**

Christopher Friel - Aye      Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye  
Joyce L. Andrade - Aye      Bethany Furtado - Aye  
Paul Cannistra - Aye

**Approval of Warrants**

MOTION 2008-89: Moved by Ms. Furtado, seconded by Mr. Cannistra, to approve the warrants presented to the Committee.

**MOTION PASSES (5-0)**

Christopher Friel - Aye      Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye  
Joyce L. Andrade - Aye      Bethany Furtado - Aye  
Paul Cannistra - Aye

**Professional Personnel Items:**

**Leave of absence:**

MOTION 2008-90: Moved by Mrs. Andrade, seconded by Mrs. Furtado, that the request for unrestricted leave by Jennifer Stevens, Elementary Teacher at Sherman School, be approved effective for the 2008-2009 school year.

**MOTION PASSES (5-0)**

Christopher Friel - Aye      Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye  
Joyce L. Andrade - Aye      Bethany Furtado - Aye  
Paul Cannistra - Aye

**Retirement(s)/Resignations(s)**

MOTION 2008-91: Moved by Mrs. Andrade, seconded by Mrs. Furtado, that the **retirement** of **Joseph Crowley**, Director of Area vocational School Career Center, be accepted effective August 31, 2008.

**MOTION PASSES (5-0)**

Christopher Friel - Aye      Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye  
Joyce L. Andrade - Aye      Bethany Furtado - Aye  
Paul Cannistra - Aye

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MOTION 2008-92: Moved by Mrs. Andrade, seconded by Mrs. Furtado, that the **retirement** of **Jean Robinson**, Elementary Teacher Holliman School, be accepted effective the last day of school; and that the **retirement** of **Susan Toole**, Elementary Special Educator Norwood School, be accepted effective the last day of school.

**MOTION PASSES (5-0)**

Christopher Friel - Aye      Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye  
Joyce L. Andrade - Aye      Bethany Furtado - Aye  
Paul Cannistra - Aye

**Senior High Social Studies Curriculum** – presentation by Dr. Anne Siesel –

Dr. Siesel said that it took almost two years to complete this curriculum. Curriculum included United States History Semester 1: *The Constitution, Reconstruction, Industrial Revolution, Westward Expansion, Imperialism, Progressivism, WWI*; United States History Semester 2: *The 20's, The Great Depression, World War II, Post War United States, Civil Rights, Vietnam War, Contemporary United States*.

MOTION 2008-93: Moved by Mrs. Furtado, seconded by Ms. Mota-Costa, to approve the Senior High Social Studies Curriculum.

**MOTION PASSES (5-0)**

Christopher Friel - Aye      Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye  
Joyce L. Andrade - Aye      Bethany Furtado - Aye  
Paul Cannistra - Aye

**All Day Kindergarten at Early Childhood Center** – presentation by Dr. D'Agostino

Proposal presented is the request for the creation of an all day kindergarten program for “at risk” students. This program would be similar to the existing all day program that is in operation at Oakland Beach School. The program would consist of twelve (12) typical developing peers and eight (8) “at risk” students, who are not IEP eligible. Entry would be based on kindergarten screening assessment for readiness into kindergarten, along with other informal assessment. The program would be available to students that are eligible for the September 1<sup>st</sup> entry date into kindergarten. Selection would be on a lottery basis and parents would provide transportation. The Warwick School District’s kindergarten curriculum will be followed. The program also includes instruction from the physical education teacher and the librarian. The funding is zero and is already in place due to the transferring of the general education kindergarten portion of the integrated kindergarten which has been moved from Cedar Hill. Upon completion students will enter the first grade in their home school. Areas of focus are: (1) develop appropriate age level behavioral and social skills for entry into first grade; (2) develop age appropriate language, listening, speaking and writing skills; (3) develop age appropriate mathematical and problem solving skills; (4) develop age appropriate hand/eye coordination as well as other basic gross locomotion patterns such as walking, jumping, hopping and leaping.

MOTION 2008-94: Moved by Mrs. Furtado, seconded by Ms. Mota-Costa, to approve the All Day Kindergarten Pilot at the Early Childhood Center. [This will be reviewed at the end of the school year.]

**MOTION PASSES (5-0)**

Christopher Friel - Aye      Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye  
Joyce L. Andrade - Aye      Bethany Furtado - Aye  
Paul Cannistra - Aye

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**Special Education Advisory Committee Appointments:** Dr. D'Agostino recommended that **Derek Thayer** and **Kristen Batchelor** be appointed to Advisory Committee.

MOTION 2008-95: Moved by Ms. Mota-Costa, seconded by Mr. Cannistra, to approve the appointment of **Derek Thayer and Kristen Batchelor** to the Warwick Special Education Advisory Committee.

**MOTION PASSES (5-0)**

Christopher Friel - Aye      Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye  
Joyce L. Andrade - Aye      Bethany Furtado - Aye  
Paul Cannistra - Aye

**Elementary Principal Reassignments:** Superintendent Horoschak recommended that **Kathryn Keenan** be transferred to the position of principal of the Early Childhood Center at the rate of a large school principal. He also recommended that **John Vuono** be assigned to Holliman School. He announced that Michele Paton would be recalled to Sherman School, but this did not need School Committee approval.

MOTION 2008-96: Moved by Mrs. Furtado, seconded by Mrs. Andrade, to approve the elementary principal reassignments.

**MOTION PASSES (5-0)**

Christopher Friel - Aye      Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye  
Joyce L. Andrade - Aye      Bethany Furtado - Aye  
Paul Cannistra - Aye

**Resolution in Support of House Bills 7108 and 7776** – Resolution to the General Assembly in support of House Bill 7108 relating to labor relations-collective bargaining. *House Bill #7108 would prohibit language in collective bargaining agreements between the state and certain state employees and between the cities and towns and their employees and in arbitration awards which contains language identifying a specific medical, dental or optometric medical insurance company. House Bill #7776 would prohibit language in collective bargaining agreements between the state and state employees and between the cities and towns and their employees and public school teachers and in arbitration awards which contains language identifying a specific medical, dental or optometric medical insurance company.* Mr. Cannistra said the resolution follows similar resolutions passed by school committees in Westerly and other communities.

Tom Daniels asked why the Committee was not supporting House Bill 7430 which would consolidate superintendents down to five. Mr. Cannistra said he would research it. Michelle Landri said do you want to take away our rights to bargain? She asked whenever you see a money savings, will you change health services? She said she didn't have any faith in United Health and you are limiting my health care options and taking away the protection we have to ensure a health care provider. She planned to attend a rally on June 3 to defeat the House bills.

MOTION 2008-97: Moved by Ms. Mota-Costa, seconded by Mr. Cannistra, to approve the resolutions in support of House Bills 7108 and 7776.

**MOTION PASSES (5-0)**

Christopher Friel - Aye      Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye  
Joyce L. Andrade - Aye      Bethany Furtado - Aye  
Paul Cannistra - Aye

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**Bids/Change Orders:**

Mr. Flood recommended that the bid for custodial supplies in the amount of \$65,605.12 be awarded as per the bid tabulation to the 14 different companies – necessary for the operations of schools for the coming year. The following is a summary of the discussion – Ms. Andrade asked can we purchase from another location if we find it cheaper – the answer was yes; Mr. Cannistra wanted to know if we order on the basis of how much we need, do we ask for a unit price, do we keep track of things, for instance “floor cleaner,” are there controls in place. Mr. Small said ordering is generally based on history and how much is used. The question was asked if we send people around to check to see what we have, are there area supervisors, and the products delivered from warehouse to schools. Ms. Mota-Costa asked if there is someone presently in charge of inventory. The Chair asked if the “chart of accounts” will help keep track of things so we could look back and see how much went to each school. Mr. Flood said the UCOA method of cost allocation does not show each school. Chairman Friel asked if the \$65,605 amount was coming from this year’s budget – and the answer was it was part of next year’s budget.

MOTION 2008-98: Moved by Chairman Friel, seconded by Mrs. Andrade, to approve the bid for custodial supplies in the amount of \$65,605.12 be awarded as per the bid tabulation to the 14 different companies.

**MOTION PASSES (3 ayes 2 nays)**

Christopher Friel - Aye	Lucille Mota-Costa - Nay
Joyce L. Andrade – Aye	Bethany Furtado – Aye
Paul Cannistra - Nay	

Mr. Flood recommended the 3-year bid for lumber be awarded to Hauser as per bid tabulation. Discussion: This is based on unit prices and on “if needed” basis. This locks in the rate.

Mr. Cannistra asked if we could do this for floor cleaner, waxes and mops, get unit prices and lock in a rate. He also commented that perhaps Diane Silva could write a program for Mr. Small.

MOTION 2008-99: Moved by Ms. Mota-Costa, seconded by Mrs. Furtado, that the 3-year bid for lumber be awarded to Hauser as per the bid tabulation.

**MOTION PASSES (5-0)**

Christopher Friel - Aye	Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye
Joyce L. Andrade – Aye	Bethany Furtado – Aye
Paul Cannistra - Aye	

Mr. Flood: said that the bid for school lunch tables in the amount of \$14,588 had been presented on March 11 for the purchase of 14 replacement school lunch tables for the elementary and secondary schools. There was some question at that time, and we came back in April, and the request was tabled again to allow David Small to present additional information regarding the condition of lunch tables in all schools. Mr. Small worked on an inventory and conditions of tables. Mr. Flood said he felt it was significant enough to bring forward to you again the bid for approval of 14 lunch tables. The survey was attached to the bid. Mr. Small survey points out 80 tables were in poor shape. As they age, we repair them, and it takes two to three people to close the tables. There are 80 out of 360 tables that are in poor shape. There is a demand for tables as the population shifts.

Ms. Mota-Costa made the recommendation that this item be tabled and asked for digital pictures of the damaged tables. Chairman Friel recommended tabling the bid and suggested creating a committee to investigate the tables along with Mr. Small. The Committee would consist of Ms. Mota-Costa and Mr. Cannistra. Mr. Flood said he would have to check with the vendor to see if the price would still stand, as the bid came in in January. Ms. Andrade said to help out, she and Ms. Furtado would take half the schools, while Mrs. Mota-Costa and Mr. Cannistra could investigate the other half.

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MOTION 2008-100: Moved by Mr. Cannistra, seconded by Mrs. Furtado, to **table the** recommended bid for lunch tables.

**MOTION PASSES (5-0)**

Christopher Friel - Aye      Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye  
Joyce L. Andrade – Aye      Bethany Furtado – Aye  
Paul Cannistra - Aye

Mr. Flood recommended the bid for NEASC accommodations in the amount of \$15,390 be awarded to Radisson as per bid tabulation. This is for meeting rooms, various accommodations and meals for the accreditation teams. Dr. Mercurio said he had asked Mr. Crowley if the students at Voch Tech could provide some meals, but the teams arrive earlier than students arrive. Meals are provided Sunday through Wednesday for 18 members of the team.

MOTION 2008-101: Moved by Ms. Mota-Costa, seconded by Mrs. Andrade, to approve the bid for NEASC accommodations in the amount of \$15,390 be awarded to Radisson as per bid tabulation.

**MOTION PASSES (5-0)**

Christopher Friel - Aye      Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye  
Joyce L. Andrade – Aye      Bethany Furtado – Aye  
Paul Cannistra - Aye

MOTION 2008-102: Moved by Mr. Cannistra, seconded by Mrs. Andrade, that the bid for emergency electric generator be rejected.

**MOTION PASSES (5-0)**

Christopher Friel - Aye      Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye  
Joyce L. Andrade – Aye      Bethany Furtado – Aye  
Paul Cannistra - Aye

**Information and proposals:**

Ms. Furtado acknowledged the students at Toll Gate who participated in “Earth Day.” Fifty students who normally drive their cars rode their bikes to school.

Superintendent Horoschak made the following statement: On Tuesday, May 13, 2008, Edward Achorn, *The Providence Journal's* Deputy editorial page editor, published a column titled “*Off the Table, Let Managers Manage Schools.*” The gist of the column is that “collective bargaining (should) be confined to salary and benefits with all else off limits.” RI State Representative Nick Gorham has proposed H-7664, which would restore management and leadership responsibilities to the purview of the school committee and administrators. He said he believes, as does the author of the bill, that it is not the rank and file in the unions, but the union leadership that is on the wrong track. The School Committee and the Superintendent, directors and principals are held accountable for student performance. He said he believes in collaboration regarding matters that impact student learning. He said he did not believe, however, that principals’ hands should be tied by rigid contract provisions on how to carry out the educational mission in their schools. This concern can best be illustrated in a letter directed to the central administration in which the Warwick Teachers Union takes a principal to task for simply doing his job. Before reading the letter from the Warwick Teachers Union, he said that the principal’s name would not be used, that he had cleared this with the principal, and the school was John Greene Elementary School.

The following were the complaints: (1) He does not adhere to teacher evaluation/observation practices under the collective Bargaining Agreement. There is no such thing as a pre-observation meeting. (2) He uses his own special forms rather than the WSD forms such as “Observation and Lesson Plan Form,” “Parent Conference Summary Form,” “Field Trip Request Summary Form” and “Student Assessment Sheet and Personal Literacy Plan Review Form.” (3) He requires that teachers write one success comment and two goals when filling out their report card comments. He should not be dictating how to fill out the report card comments especially to student whom he has not taught or assessed on a daily basis; that’s the

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professional responsibility and discretion of the classroom teacher. (4) He reviews all report cards and embarrasses teachers by commenting to them regarding their use of grammar and spelling. (5) When teachers are absent, he questions why they were out. He has called teachers at their home who were out due to personal illness under 9-1 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. (6) He is requiring all teachers to complete "End of Year Packets" for each student in each grade. (7) He is requiring that assessments of each student be made in order to place the student in classrooms for the 2008-09 school year. Teachers must use special forms for this task. (8) He is also requiring a print out of all completed student profile sheets containing their current assessments by May 9, 2008. The letter goes on to say: [He] has negatively impacted the learning community at John Greene Elementary School by his actions and lack of professionalism to his faculty. Please discuss these concerns with [him] as soon as possible. I have informed the teachers at John Greene Elementary School to keep a record of their time spent filling out all of the various forms. If [his] behavior continues, the Union will be processing a grievance (Step2) on behalf of the faculty.

The Superintendent went on to say that in my first year as Superintendent of the Warwick Public Schools, I have been inundated with union grievances that challenge the principals' management of the school environment, especially their interaction with the staff. For example, challenging a principal's right to sit in on teachers' common planning time and participating in discussions about topics on the agenda. Yes, some grievances have merit, but all too many are specious attempts to restrict the principals' leadership and management. I do not take issue with teacher salaries and benefits and the right to determine them through collective bargaining. I do take issue, though, in frivolous attempts to trip up our principals and administrators and keep them from creating the best educational environment for our students and helping our professional staff become even better at their jobs. Is it not time that we take the time to discuss and collaborate on the factors that create the best educational experience for our students and to allow those responsible for managing our schools to provide the leadership that facilitates such results?

**Public comment:**

Mr. Holtzman remarked that Peter Horoschak did see me, but the statement made caught him off guard. This was a communication to Mr. Bushell with a copy to the Superintendent. He said working conditions are important, and if there is a problem we should come together as equals to discuss. Michelle Landri said she had no public comment to make tonight, until that – I am mortified. In a district this size 23 different schools, 23 administrators and 1100 teachers, what if one principal expects one kind of form and another expects another from. There has to be some equity. It is up to the principal to create a learning environment, that is why we need collective bargaining. Tracey McDermott said it is insulting to the six science lab assistants as it looks as if we are "helpers" or "aides" instead of assistants. The assistants have college degrees and two have Bachelor degrees. To give impression that labs will run without us is delusional at best. Superintendent Horoschak said let me reiterate we have financial problems – I chose to recommend school closure rather than programs. Ms. McDermott commented people are not walking the buildings, we know what is being used and not being used. Ms. Netcoh commented that she hoped that the Social Studies curriculum just approved gets more respect than the English Curriculum. GBP is choking the life out of the Senior English Program. George Landri commented he hoped the Superintendent's door was always opened, because he would love to talk to him. The Superintendent accepted.

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. MOTION 2008-103: Moved by Mr. Cannistra, seconded by Mrs. Furtado, to adjourn.

**MOTION PASSES (5-0)**

Christopher Friel - Aye      Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye  
Joyce L. Andrade - Aye      Bethany Furtado - Aye  
Paul Cannistra - Aye

Meeting adjourned: 9:30 p.m.  
Bethany Furtado, Clerk  
Betsey Snipes, Secretary