

Warwick School Committee Minutes

Meeting of April 8, 2008

Open Session

The Warwick School Committee met in Open Session at Pilgrim High School on Tuesday, April 8, 2008. Chairman Friel called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with the following in attendance:

COMMITTEE

Christopher Friel, Chairperson

Lucille Mota-Costa, Vice Chair

Joyce L. Andrade

Paul Cannistra

ADMINISTRATION

Peter P. Horoschak, Superintendent

Victor Mercurio, Director of Secondary Education

Leonard Flood, Director of Business Affairs

Rosemary Healey, Esq., Director of Compliance & Human Resources

MOTION 2008-62: Moved by Mrs. Andrade, seconded by Ms. Mota-Costa, 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) and (a)(2).

MOTION PASSES (3-0)

Christopher Friel – Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye

Joyce L. Andrade – absent for vote Bethany Furtado – absent

Paul Cannistra - Aye

Meeting reconvened at 7:05 p.m. with the following in attendance in addition to those listed above:

Robert T. Bushell, Director of Elementary Education

Richard D'Agostino, Director Special Services

David E. Small, Director of Buildings and Grounds

Approval of Minutes

MOTION 2008-63: Moved by Mrs. Andrade, seconded by Mr. Cannistra, to approve the Minutes of the Open Session for February 7, 2008, March 11, 2008 and March 25, 2008.

MOTION PASSES (4-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye

Joyce L. Andrade – Aye Bethany Furtado – absent

Paul Cannistra - Aye

MOTION 2008-64: Moved by Mrs. Andrade, seconded by Mr. Cannistra, to approve the Minutes of the Executive Session for February 7, 2008, March 11, 2008 and March 25, 2008.

MOTION PASSES (4-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye

Joyce L. Andrade – Aye Bethany Furtado – absent

Paul Cannistra - Aye

Approval of transfers:

MOTION 2008-65: Moved by Ms. Mota-Costa, seconded by Mr. Cannistra, to approve the transfers presented to the Committee.

MOTION PASSES (4-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye

Joyce L. Andrade – Aye Bethany Furtado – absent

Paul Cannistra - Aye

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Approval of Warrants:

MOTION 2008-66: Moved by Mr. Cannistra, seconded by Ms. Mota-Costa, to approve the warrants presented to the Committee.

MOTION PASSES (4-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye

Joyce L. Andrade – Aye Bethany Furtado – absent

Paul Cannistra - Aye

Professional Personnel items:

Appointments:

MOTION 2008-67: Moved by Mrs. Andrade, seconded by Mr. Cannistra, to approve the appointment of Stephanie Florio, math teacher, step 5, pending receipt of emergency certification from the RIDOE.

MOTION PASSES (4-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye

Joyce L. Andrade – Aye Bethany Furtado – absent

Paul Cannistra - Aye

Leave of absence:

MOTION 2008-68: Moved by Mrs. Andrade, seconded by Mr. Cannistra, to approve the parental leave for Erin Taylor, elementary special educator at Sherman, effective for the first semester of the 2008-2009 school year.

MOTION PASSES (4-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye

Joyce L. Andrade – Aye Bethany Furtado – absent

Paul Cannistra - Aye

Retirements/resignation:

MOTION 2008-69: Moved by Mrs. Andrade, seconded by Mr. Cannistra, that the retirement of Mary Ann Marcello, special class pre-school teacher at John Brown Francis, be accepted effective the last day of school; that the retirement of Betty Pearce, librarian at Veterans High School, be accepted effective the last day of school;

and that the resignation of Jennifer Basile, English teacher, be accepted effective the last day of school.

MOTION PASSES (4-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye

Joyce L. Andrade – Aye Bethany Furtado – absent

Paul Cannistra - Aye

Classified Personnel items:

Resignation/retirements:

MOTION 2008-70: Moved by Mrs. Andrade, seconded by Mr. Cannistra, that the resignation of Patricia Balles, attendance clerk at Gorton Jr. High School, be accepted effective March 4, 2008 .

MOTION PASSES (4-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye

Joyce L. Andrade – Aye Bethany Furtado – absent

Paul Cannistra - Aye

MOTION 2008-71: Moved by Mrs. Andrade, seconded by Mr. Cannistra, that the retirement of Arthur Pearson, weekend custodian, Gorton Junior High School, be accepted effective February 11, 2008.

MOTION PASSES (4-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye

Joyce L. Andrade – Aye Bethany Furtado – absent

Paul Cannistra - Aye

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Coaching appointments:

MOTION 2008-72: Moved by Mr. Cannistra, seconded by Ms. Mota-Costa, to approve the following coaching appointments: Ken Rix, head coach boys' outdoor track at Veterans (for one year only); Jared Breedon, assistant coach boys' outdoor track at Veterans (for one year only); Christopher Ursillo, freshman coach-baseball at Veterans (for one year only); Kathleen O'Grady, assistant coach girls soccer at Veterans; Gary Fitzpatrick, head coach football at Pilgrim, and Jason Huddon, assistant coach boys' outdoor track at Pilgrim.

MOTION PASSES (4-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye

Joyce L. Andrade – Aye Bethany Furtado – absent

Paul Cannistra - Aye

Graduation by Proficiency: presented by Dr. Mercurio.

Communication

- Provide consistent communication to the faculty, students, and parents about the senior exhibition project and its significance across all learning areas**
- Communicate the timeline and components of the project to students beginning in the freshmen year. Freshman will have the distinct advantage of seeing their classmates go through the process**

ahead of them

- Received input from Mr. Cannistra on a variety of different ideas as to who to disseminate the information relative to GBP to generate interest and improve understanding
- We have invited two students from each high school (a junior and a senior) to join the district committee. As of this presentation, only Pilgrim is represented. We are also in the process of rotating the meeting venues so that student representatives have a greater ability to attend.

Research Paper

- We are using a modified “YES” test to facilitate the faculty read of the papers
- Students have been assured that they would have ample opportunity to make necessary corrections to their papers to meet the requirements of the “YES” test.
- The protocol for the faculty read of the research papers has been revised in order to have a more widespread understanding of its purpose and direction as well as its connection to the May panel presentation.
- There were administrative controls that needed to be added/changed so that multiple submissions did not trigger false plagiarism results as part of the Turnitin.com requirement
- In terms of considering having students write their research proposals over the summer, we do not have the capacity to be able to facilitate this work during the summer; however, there would be nothing to prevent students from engaging in some preliminary

writing to get the ball rolling

Mentoring

- **We are taking steps now to delineate ways in which students could get themselves to the point where they could engage in this work with the proper sign-offs from parents and mentors**
- **We will more widely disseminate the bank of mentors after we get feedback from them.**
- **We will continue to use a variety of formats to gain more mentors**
- **Next year we will allow faculty members who do not currently have the student to serve as mentors**
- **We have extended mentor guided fieldwork deadlines on an as needed basis to ensure that students have the chance to meet the deadlines. Several students had indicated that they had mentor-guided fieldwork that was to take place beyond the approved deadline; however, the goal is to get students fully prepared to enter the panel presentation. A deadline to close to the presentation date would make these preparations for hundreds of students very difficult**

Panel Presentation

- **Students were concerned that the people who comprised the various panels would not have working and/or detailed knowledge of their respective topics for the project.**

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- The students were reminded that although there would be a member of the faculty whose learning area might be able to provide some knowledge of the topic, the students presenting would probably be the most expert person in the room speaking about the topic. Students also raised concerns that the members of the panel would not have specific knowledge about the extent to which they extended their learning over the course of the year.
- Students were told that for the purposes of this year's presentations, the panel would be directed in training sessions to view the students' work as a demonstration of learning and the process associated with this learning rather than a sole focus on the "learning stretch" demonstrated through the project.
- Provide necessary training to oral panel presentation members so that there is more consistent understanding of the work that students completed this year.
- Students also indicated that more preparation in delivering oral reports across learning areas as well as opportunities for technical writing would have been beneficial to them.
- Teachers going through the course alignment process are taking a look at points at which these things can be practiced and achieved throughout the course of the high school experience

Conclusions

As has been discussed and presented previously, the class of 2008 presents unique challenges and opportunities for the implementation of the senior exhibition project. The process of the senior exhibition

project has taught us much about the opportunities that all students have to meet the academic expectations found in the district mission.

...Writing extensive research papers and giving oral presentations proves a challenge for many students. This is not because they cannot successfully complete the task(s). Often schools have determined that students are not attaining proficiency on a senior project because they lack substantial experience from earlier grades with extended writing and/or oral presentations. In essence, students will require multiple opportunities in multiple courses to develop the requisite the level(s) of proficiency. The customary experiences of schools with a senior project is consistent with the expectation of how PBGRs must be taught and assessed over multiple years in multiple ways.

In is unreasonable to expect that students in the class of 2008 have all had similar experiences in terms of meeting the academic expectations in the mission.

Numbers as of April 8, 2008:

Pilgrim High School Veterans

297 seniors as of right now we are missing

28 missing SP research paper packets 35 students with fieldwork hours

10 no SP research paper or fieldwork hours 26 research papers

46 missing fieldwork hours

Toll Gate

Fieldwork -247 students

206 students with completed fieldwork

25 students with fieldwork extensions

13 students with fieldwork issues (currently being worked on)

3 students have NO fieldwork (also have academic issues)

Research Paper - 247 students

116 passed

114 Not Yets

10 Extensions

7 NO papers (have academic issues - 6 of these 7 also have fieldwork issues)

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**Early Childhood Center at Drum Rock – presented by Dr. D’Agostino:
The first phase of the 3-year plan designed to return outside tuition preschool students and place them in the district’s elementary schools has been extremely successful. The next phase, which is a year ahead of schedule, will relocate the two remaining preschool**

programs, but the question is where. Due to consolidation of schools, preschool programs at Cedar Hill and special ed programs at Robertson must be relocated. There are Federal and state mandates that must be complied with. During the next three months there are 20 students will meet the criteria and another 20 students for September 2008. There are also four and five year old students that are being referred for evaluations. Projected savings for the final phase of relocating the two preschool programs is estimated at \$400,000. There is a possibility that RIDE within the next two years may be mandating all day kindergarten programs and preschool classes. Staff members' salaries are already funded by either general funds of federal grant IDEA. It is imperative that a coordinator/administrator position be established with the creation of an Early Childhood Center. The cost will not result in additional funding from the district. Through staffing restructuring 60% of the salary can be absorbed while other sources can make up the difference. Additional revenues: Presently typical developing peers attend the program free with parents providing transportation. In other communities, such as Cranston and Smithfield, a charge is made. If we were to charge a nominal fee of \$10/day for the approximately 40 to 50 typical developing peers that we have, it would general additional revenue. ESY (Extended School Year) Program – students, including preschoolers, have been using Drum Rock facility for the past 15 years during the ESY summer program. There have been no complaints in the appropriateness of any of the accommodations in the facilities. Staff members indicated they have

used the traditional primary equipment (lavatories, sinks and playground equipment) without incident, accident or student injury. Drum Rock is the only school completely handicapped accessible and air-conditioned. The playground has had improvements and is totally fenced in. The ESY program is supervised by a supervisor/principal. With the creation of the Early Childhood Center and the coordinator/administrator's position, this person could assume the responsibility of ESY. The creation of an Early Childhood Center would benefit the city by providing early childhood instruction in a financially responsible manner. Drum Rock's location, the building capacity to accommodate students with special needs and its summer functions make this building an ideal location for this purpose.

Superintendent Peter Horoschak recommended that action to approve this proposal be taken. (The provision for charging tuition to parents of "typical" preschool students is presented in concept only.)

Mr. Latierre commented on the two playgrounds, saying one is infested with bees and other is for 5-years old or older children and that preschool students are not allowed. He asked who would continue to maintain them. He said that there is furniture suitable for three rooms not six or seven and that the bathrooms and water fountains are not designed for 4 to 5 year old children. He was also concerned about the time line. Mr. Daniels said he was concerned

with how much funding is needed to open the education center – in my opinion you will have to cut more money from the budget to reopen Drum Rock. Chairman Friel said a \$400,000 savings will come from bringing the remaining outside tuition preschool students back into the district, and that the Early Childhood Center proposal was included as part of the redistricting and consolidation recommendation and any costs to keep the building open to house the programs that will be brought there were already included with the overall projected \$2.7 million savings.

MOTION 2008-73: Moved by Ms. Mota-Costa, seconded by Mr. Cannistra, to approve the creation of an Early Childhood Center at Drum Rock.

MOTION PASSES (4-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye

Joyce L. Andrade – Aye Bethany Furtado – absent

Paul Cannistra - Aye

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Veterans Generator Grant - David Small reported that Chief Walsh has informed me that we have received a grant for the Warwick Veterans High School generator. The grant is for \$32,000. The terms are that whatever funds we receive, we must match. In light of the fact that we don't have extra funds, I propose that we replace the existing

generator in kind for approximately \$10,000 and use our forces for installation. The cost of our personnel would be the matching funds.

MOTION 2008-74: Moved by Mrs. Andrade, seconded by Mr. Cannistra, to approve.

MOTION PASSES (4-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye

Joyce L. Andrade – Aye Bethany Furtado – absent

Paul Cannistra - Aye

Extension of Vehicle Maintenance Contract - Mr. Flood reported that on December 12, 2006, the Warwick School Committee awarded a contract to First Student for the period 1/1/07 to 6/30/07, with the option to renew for two additional years. The contract has been extended four times with the most recent action taking place at the November 13, 2007 School Committee meeting. That extension officially expired at the end of February 2008. He recommended approving an extension of the contract with First Student through June 30, 2008 – the end of the first option year under the contract. Mr. Cannistra asked if there were any hidden fees, and Mr. Flood responded it would be what we are paying now. Next year the contract calls for an increase.

Ms. Andrade stated that she would like the administration to pursue making arrangements with the City to piggy back with the City on parts. As parts are needed, we could get the discount price the City

is getting (sometimes 25% to 75% off). She said that the City has agreed to this.

MOTION 2008-75: Moved by Mrs. Andrade, seconded by Mr. Cannistra, approve the extension of maintenance contract for school buses, with provision that the administration look into piggy backing parts discount with the City.

MOTION PASSES (4-0)

Christopher Friel – Aye Lucille Mota-Costa – Aye

Joyce L. Andrade – Aye Bethany Furtado – absent

Paul Cannistra – Aye

Bids/Change Orders:

MOTION 2008-76: Moved by Mr. Cannistra, seconded by Ms. Mota-Costa, that the bid for health supplies be awarded to Moore, at the bid prices and discount that was submitted.

MOTION PASSES (4-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye

Joyce L. Andrade – Aye Bethany Furtado – absent

Paul Cannistra - Aye

The Chair said that the bids for school lunch tables be rejected will continue at this time.

Information and Proposals: Ms. Andrade requested that the school consolidation tasks and timelines be posted on our website. She

also requested to be notified of the orientation days, specific unemployment costs, and whether or not students transfer out of the system due to consolidation.

Public Comment: Darlene commented that GBP Toll Gate students have not found value in the program and want it to go away. A parent of a Toll Gate student said her daughter is scared to death she will not graduate and she is a senior with high honors. Mr. Daniels asked how the redistricting committee was picked and the Superintendent commented I was charged to put it together and explained on the members were selected. The Superintendent also commented that finding uses for those facilities closed is part of this process. Mr. Daniels asked why an ad for a custodian was posted for a school that is being closed.

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Ms. Petite, a teacher at Rhodes, said when discussion about schools closing, and children being disbursed to other schools, she was told no itinerant would be on “carts,” and now she learned that there will be carts.

Next scheduled regular meeting is May 13th.

There will be budget meetings scheduled and they will be announced.

MOTION 2008-77: Moved by Mr. Cannistra, seconded by Ms. Mota-Costa, to adjourn.

MOTION PASSES (4-0)

Christopher Friel - Aye Lucille Mota-Costa - Aye

Joyce L. Andrade – Aye Bethany Furtado – absent

Paul Cannistra - Aye

Meeting adjourned: 8:45 p.m.

Bethany Furtado, Clerk

Betsey Snipes, Secretary